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ABSTRACT

This collection of addresses, remarks, and papers presented at the second White House Conference on Library and Information Services (WHCLIS2) includes excerpts from remarks made by First Lady Barbara Bush, President George Bush, Marilyn Quayle, and William T. Esrey of United Telecommunications, Inc., and keynote addresses by Mary Futrell from the Center for the Study of Education and National Development at George Washington University, and Major R. Owen, Chairman of the Select Education Subcommittee of the House Education and Labor Committee ("Libraries in America 2000"). These presentations speak to the three conference themes of Literacy, Democracy, and Productivity. Also included in the collection are: (1) "Moving from 'Special Services' to Universal Access" (Deborah Kaplan, Associate Director of Public Education, World Institute on Disability); (2) remarks by Gordon M. Ambach in introducing Lamar Alexander (U.S. Secretary of Education) together with remarks by Alexander; (3) "The GOPAC Project" (Newt Gingrich, U.S. Congressman from Georgia); (4) remarks by Paul Simon (U.S. Senator from Illinois), and (5) remarks by James Billington (Librarian of Congress). (MAB)

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White House Conference on Library and Information Services:

Keynote Addresses, Remarks, and Presented Papers

(2nd, Washington, D.C., July 9-13, 1991)

Excerpts from remarks by:

First Lady Barbara Bush
President George Bush
Marilyn Quayle
and
William T. Esrey, Chairman and CEO
United Telecommunications, Inc.

Keynote Addresses by:

Mary Futrell, Senior Fellow
Center for the Study of Education and National Development
George Washington University

Hon. Major R. Owen
U.S. Congressman from New York
Chairman of the Select Education Subcommittee
of the House Education and Labor Committee

Papers and Remarks Presented by:

Deborah Kaplan, Director of Public Education
World Institute on Disability

Lamar Alexander
U.S. Secretary of Education

Hon. Newt Gingrich
U.S. Congressman from Georgia

Hon. Paul Simon
U.S. Senator from Illinois

Dr. James Billington
Librarian of Congress

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Excerpts from Mrs. Bush's remarks at the 1991 White House Conference on Library and Information Services on Wednesday, July 10, 1991, Washington Convention Center Hall A:

(Provided for publication in the White House Conference on Library and Information Services newspaper)

"I KNOW HOW LONG AND HARD AND WELL YOU'VE WORKED OVER THE PAST FEW YEARS TO GET TO THIS WEEK ... AND I'M DEEPLY GRATEFUL THAT OUR LIBRARIES HAVE THE STAUNCH SUPPORT OF SO MANY GIFTED AND CONCERNED PEOPLE -- PEOPLE WHO UNDERSTAND THAT LIBRARIES REALLY ARE ONE OF THE GREATEST GIFTS THE AMERICAN PEOPLE HAVE EVER GIVEN THEMSELVES. THEY'RE A GIFT FOR ALL OF US -- NO RESTRICTIONS OF AGE OR GENDER OR CLASS OR INTEREST.

BUT THEY'RE A GIFT THAT NEEDS OUR CONSTANT CARE AND ATTENTION -- LIKE EVERYTHING THAT'S PRECIOUS AND VALUABLE TO US. THAT'S WHY YOUR THOUGHTFUL PROGRESS TOWARD THIS SECOND WHITE HOUSE CONFERENCE HAS BEEN SO IMPORTANT, AND WHY YOUR JOINT RECOMMENDATIONS WILL MEAN SO MUCH TO ALL OF US.

YOU SIMPLY COULDN'T BE A MORE REPRESENTATIVE GROUP OF AMERICANS FROM A BROADER RANGE OF OUR COMMUNITIES. AND THAT'S EXACTLY THE KIND OF FORUM THIS CONFERENCE DESERVES -- PEOPLE FROM THE REAL WORLD WHO REALLY CAN SHARE THE WHOLE SPECTRUM OF VIEWS AND PERSPECTIVES ON OUR NATION'S INFORMATION NEEDS.

AND THE ISSUES YOU'VE CHOSEN TO FOCUS ON -- LITERACY, PRODUCTIVITY, DEMOCRACY -- WELL, THEY PRETTY MUCH SUM UP A LOT OF WHAT I'M MOST CONCERNED ABOUT IN THIS WORLD. LITERACY, MY SPECIAL CONCERN, HAS SO MUCH TO DO WITH THE OTHER TWO -- HOW WELL WE WORK, AS INDIVIDUALS AND AS A NATION ... AND HOW WE CAN BEST STAY INFORMED AND FREE IN THIS BEST OF ALL POSSIBLE DEMOCRACIES."

"IN HER BEAUTIFUL LITTLE BOOK, ONE WRITERS BEGINNINGS, EUDORA WELTY WROTE ABOUT HER FIRST EXPERIENCES WITH THE JACKSON, MISSISSIPPI PUBLIC LIBRARY ... ABOUT BEING TOLD THAT SHE COULD ONLY TAKE OUT TWO BOOKS AT A TIME, AND PEDALING FURIOUSLY HOME ON HER BICYCLE WITH HER TWO PRECIOUS BOOKS, WHICH SHE WOULD DEVOUR AS FAST AS SHE COULD SO THAT SHE COULD PEDAL BACK TO GET TWO MORE.

THAT'S THE KIND OF HUNGER OUR LIBRARIES SATISFY FOR SO MANY PEOPLE IN SO MANY WAYS -- THE HUNGER TO LEARN, FREELY AND ALL OF OUR LIVES. I'VE SEEN IT IN THE WONDERFUL WORK SO MANY LIBRARIES ARE DOING FOR THE LITERACY OF ADULTS AND THE BUDDING LITERACY OF CHILDREN. LIBRARIES REALLY ARE PLACES FOR LIFELONG READING ... AND LIFELONG LEARNING ... FROM THE BEGINNING ON UP."

"SO MANY ELOQUENT PEOPLE HAVE SAID STIRRING THINGS ABOUT WHAT LIBRARIES HAVE MEANT TO THEM, BUT WHAT WILL ALWAYS STICK IN MY MIND IS A STORY ABOUT A SMALL BOY IN A LIBRARY FOR THE FIRST TIME. HE LOOKS AROUND IN AWE AND SAYS, 'ALL THEM BOOKS ... AND SOMETHING WRITTEN IN EVERY ONE.'

THAT'S WHAT LIBRARIES SHOULD BE -- AND MORE, HOMES FOR ALL THEM BOOKS AND ALL THEM OTHER WAYS FOR US TO LEARN WHAT WE NEED TO KNOW."

THE WHITE HOUSE

Office of the Press Secretary

For Immediate Release July 10, 1991

REMARKS BY THE PRESIDENT AT THE WHITE HOUSE CONFERENCE ON LIBRARY AND INFORMATION SERVICES

The D.C. Convention Center
Washington, D.C.

1:50 P.M. EDT

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you all very much for that welcome, and may I thank our marvelous band over there who brought us the music. (Applause.) What a job they always do. (Applause.) And may I, at the outset of these comments, thank those who have served and worked so hard to make this successful event a reality -- Charles Reid, the Chairman of the White House Conference -- (Applause.) I'm glad his family's out there. (Laughter.) Richard Akeroyd, the Cochairman; and Jean Curtis, Joseph Fitzsimmons and all the rest of you out there who have participated in this very active, and, I am told, successful conference. And welcome to all the state delegates out there.

First, let me say I am delighted to be here. I just checked in with the boss of the East Wing of the White House -- that is Barbara Pierce Bush -- (laughter) -- and she, who -- (applause) -- she was just so pleased with the response, and she is so intimately involved in the work of all of you, but of many of you specifically in this room. And I just wanted to say that I appreciate very much your kindness and courtesy to her.

Since presidents seem to get their own libraries -- (laughter) -- goes with the territory -- it's nice not to worry that one of you will try to collect my overdue fines. (Laughter.)

I'm proud of our country's libraries. And, you know, a member of my family wrote a book that's available in most of them. Ironically, Millie is not allowed to get a library card. (Laughter.) And there's a great injustice and discrimination out there. (Laughter.) Incidentally, that book -- it just shows you the power of books. That book, which was written to benefit Barbara's educational foundation -- maybe she mentioned it this morning, I don't know -- but it is raised for that educational cause over $1,100,000. (Applause.) It shows you the power of books, and the power of what can happen. And I know you all understand what I mean by that.

You know, Franklin Delano Roosevelt once gave his son James some advice that I've always tried to follow; sometimes I fail. To give a good speech, he said, you must "be sincere, you must be brief and be seated." (Laughter.) Well, I promise to do all three, not because I'm not enthralled with the work of the conference, but because tomorrow Barbara and I leave for Maine, where I will be receiving the Japanese Prime Minister -- (applause) -- Kennebunkport contingent over here -- (laughter) -- and receive the Japanese Prime Minister and then go on -- we both head abroad for the G-7 meeting and then on to Greece and Turkey. So you've caught us at the beginning or at the end of a busy week, and the beginning of another one.

But I am glad to be here with you today, because this magnificent event builds upon years of hard work. And let's face it: the world has changed dramatically since the last White House Conference on Library and Information Services. The thirst for freedom has swept aside the acceptance of tyranny. New and amazing technologies have made ideas accessible to everyone. Books, faxes, computer disks, television broadcasts have simply shattered the reign of ignorance and created a whole new world of enterprise, competition and, with it, intellectual growth.

So you have come together from across this land to honor a common, exciting dream -- the dream of making this the greatest nation that it can possibly be. (Applause.)

Your poster captures beautifully the essence of this challenge. The background picture of the world emphasizes the fact that we now live in a world united by information highways and joined in productive competition.

The three photographs superimposed over that globe represent your three goals: Literacy, productivity and democracy. An open book, surrounded by other books, reminds us that the quest for the future begins with literacy. And again, with great pride, Barbara has joined many of you, and she has devoted a great deal of time to this fundamental and important cause. Because, you see, she knows and you all know better than most Americans that to open a book is to open the doors of opportunity. Illiteracy bars those doors and it wastes our most precious resource -- our minds.

Second on your poster is a photo of a computer keyboard. Now, I can talk about computers now. (Laughter.) Marginally qualified to talk about computers now. (Laughter and applause.) But seriously, part of our education America 2000 Strategy is that nobody is too old to learn, and I think it 's a very important concept. So a couple of months ago I decided to keep up with our grandchildren, not just in Nintendo, but I mean in trying to learn how to run one of these things. So I started taking lessons. And it's amazing -- youngsters understand the technology upon which our future rests, and we've got to rush to catch up with them.

Technology can make us more productive as a society, and information technology arms us with unprecedented power. Our kids will need high-tech skills to compete in the global marketplace of the 21st century. And we already know they have the character: we've seen them create a computer industry out of virtually nothing. And in the Gulf, we've seen them turn these sophisticated weapons into not what some would want us have believe are totally tools of destruction -- in this instance, tools of liberation. And if we want to let our national spirit soar, we must cultivate ideas and knowledge. Perhaps no one will play a bigger role in setting the American spirit aloft than the very people in this room. (Applause.)

You will help us explore and conquer a new electronic frontier. Already, these fiber optic cables carry billions of pieces of information in a wire as thin as a strand of hair. Satellite systems beam information around the world. computers combine music and video and text for interactive teaching systems, opening up whole new horizons for our fantastic teachers all across this country. And as I look at this, and I expect as you look at it, we recognize that this is just a beginning.

The administration's high performance computing and communications initiative proposes developing a national information network. Now, this network would offer high-speed computing capabilities to research and educational institutions. And it also would give experts the experience necessary to develop a broader, privately-operated national information network. such an infrastructure would allow all Americans to share quality information and entertainment when and where they want -- and at a reasonable cost.

This amazing beginning equips us to take on the challenge of democracy -- symbolized again in your poster by our Constitution. Thomas Jefferson once wrote, "A democratic society depends upon an informed and educated citizenry." Jefferson knew that education is not a trivia game -- a contest to acquire little scraps of data. A sound education informs our passion and protects our values, and instills respect for the truth. Information is democracy's greatest and surest weapon -- and our world's greatest and surest hope.

I expect -- well, put it this way, -- I know that you don't often get credit as revolutionaries. Too often, people think of the library and information science professionals as people who go around saying, "Shhhhhh!" -- do that for a living. But in fact -- and this is the way we look at it in the Bush family, and I say family advisedly -- Barbara is my anchor to windward in all of this -- you preserve democracy's greatest resource -- the ideas that have helped reshape an entire world. (Applause.)

Earlier this year -- and I hope all are familiar with it -- we introduced a new education strategy. America 2000 we call it. America 2000 isn't another slogan, wrap-around some proposed legislation. America 2000 calls for a revolution in American education. It challenges all Americans to raise expectations, to pledge genuine accountability, and above all, to create a new generation of American schools. And when we say "new generation," we're not just talking about putting a coating of paint on an old way of educating, we're talking about really a revolution in American schools. It sets out to transform a nation at risk into a nation of students. And it urges everyone to make our communities places where learning will happen.

Libraries and information services stand at the center of this revolution. (Applause.) And today, our more than 15,000 public libraries serve nearly 70 percent of our population, they loan 1.3 billion items each year, and they use less than one percent of our tax dollars. I think you'll agree -- that is quite a bargain. (Applause.) Our libraries serve as the schoolrooms for lifetime learning -- and the launching pads for our future.

All of you involved with this conference have made an invaluable contribution to the progress of American life. And so I look forward to receiving your policy recommendations, and I am committed to working with you to improve our libraries and information networks -- and to carry American 2000 forward. (Applause.)

J. Robert Oppenheimer said it beautifully: "the unrestricted access to knowledge may make a vast, complex, every more specialized and expert technological world -- nevertheless a world of human community."

So together, I think we will ensure an America of the greatest technological and human success. The potential is limitless. And this is an exciting time to be alive, and I can tell you, I view it as a fantastically exciting time in our history to have the honor of being President of the United States. (Applause.)

So thank you all very much for your part in shaping the future. I don't think you can be a President and live in that magnificent house down the road there without thinking about the future. And to do that, we have to county our blessings for the past. We have to count our blessings for what we call A Thousand Points of Light as well, and that is men and women -- a volunteer commitment, getting out there and helping others and setting standards that the rest of the world admires and respects. And that is where each and every one of you come in.

Thank you, and may God bless the United States of America. Thank you very much. (Applause.)

End 2:04 P.M. EDT

MARYLYN QUAYLE

THANK YOU SO MUCH, ____, FOR THAT MOST GENEROUS INTRODUCTION. THE FIRST INJUNCTION OF ANY GOOD EDITOR IS TO USE NO MORE WORDS THAN NECESSARY TO SAY NOTHING MORE THAN IS NEEDED. IT'S ADVICE RARELY FOLLOWED IN WASHINGTON BUT THIS NOON I'M GOING TO TAKE A STAB AT IT. EDITH WHARTON LIKED TO TELL OF HER GOOD FRIEND HENRY JAMES, A GREAT WRITER BUT ALSO A RATHER LONGWINDED ONE, WITH WHOM SHE WAS OUT RIDING IN THE ENGLISH COUNTRYSIDE ONE DAY. THE PAIR FOUND THEMSELVES LOST IN A RAINSTORM, UNTIL JAMES SPOTTED AN OLD MAN BY THE ROADSIDE. A CHARACTERISTICALLY VERBOSE INQUIRY ENSUED.

"MY FRIEND, TO PUT IT TO YOU IN TWO WORDS, THIS LADY AND I HAVE JUST ARRIVED HERE FROM SLOUGH; THAT IS TO SAY, TO BE MORE STRICTLY ACCURATE, WE HAVE RECENTLY PASSED THROUGH SLOUGH ON OUR WAY HERE, HAVING ACTUALLY MOTORED TO WINDSOR FROM RYE, WHICH WAS OUR POINT OF DEPARTURE; AND THE DARKNESS HAVING OVERTAKEN US, WE SHOULD BE MUCH OBLIGED IF YOU WOULD TELL US WHERE WE ARE NOW IN RELATION, SAY TO THE HIGH STREET, WHICH, AS YOU OF COURSE KNOW, LEADS TO THE CASTLE, AFTER LEAVING ON THE LEFT HAND THE TURN DOWN TO THE RAILWAY STATION."

JAMES' TORTURED APPEAL MET WITH SILENCE, AND A SOMEWHAT DAZED LOOK ON THE WRINKLED FACE AT THE CAR WINDOW. BUT THE AUTHOR, UNFAZED, PLUNGED ON. "IN SHORT MY GOOD MAN, WHAT I WANT TO PUT TO YOU IN A WORD IS THIS: SUPPOSING WE HAVE ALREADY (AS I HAVE REASON TO THINK WE HAVE) DRIVEN PAST THE TURN DOWN TO THE RAILWAY STATION (WHICH IN THAT CASE, BY THE WAY, WOULD PROBABLY NOT HAVE BEEN ON OUR LEFT HAND, BUT ON OUR RIGHT) WHERE ARE WE NOW IN RELATION TO..."

EDITH WHARTON HAD HAD ENOUGH. "OH PLEASE," SHE INTERJECTED, "DO ASK HIM WHERE THE KING'S ROAD IS!"

"YE'RE IN IT" SAID THE OLD MAN.

LIKE WHARTON AND JAMES, WE ALSO FIND OURSELVES "IN IT" -- SEEKING DIRECTIONS IN A NATIONAL DEBATE OVER LITERACY, PRODUCTIVITY, ACCESS TO INFORMATION, EDUCATION FOR CITIZENSHIP AND, YES, POLITICAL CORRECTNESS. IT IS NOT THE KING'S ROAD WE DESIRE BUT THE HIGHWAY OF DEMOCRACY. AFTER ALL, BEFORE YOU CAN LEAD YOU MUST FIRST LEARN TO LISTEN. THIS WEEK IS AN OPPORTUNITY FOR WASHINGTON POLICYMAKERS TO LISTEN AND TO LEARN FROM PROFESSIONALS IN THE FIELD, LIBRARY TRUSTEES AND CONCERNED OFFICIALS AT ALL LEVELS OF GOVERNANCE. IN THE TRADITIONAL LIBRARY, SILENCE WAS

ENFORCED. NOT HERE. THE ONLY TRADITION BY WHICH WE ARE BOUND IS THE DIVERSE GENIUS OF AMERICA AT HER MOST REPRESENTATIVE.

ON HIS 90TH BIRTHDAY, JUSTICE OLIVER WENDELL HOLMES TOLD AN INQUIRING JOURNALIST "THE SECRET OF MY SUCCESS IS THAT AT AN EARLY AGE I DISCOVERED I WAS NOT GOD." HOLMES, A LIFELONG READER, WAS EXPRESSING SOMETHING OF THE PERSPECTIVE AND HUMILITY THAT ANY SENSITIVE SOUL MUST FEEL WHEN STANDING BEFORE THE CARD CATALOGUE OF EVEN THE SMALLEST AMERICAN LIBRARY. THAT IS ONE FORM OF EDUCATION, AND BY NO MEANS THE LEAST USEFUL.

THERE ARE OTHERS. IN THE THIRTY YEARS SINCE ROOM SIZED COMPUTERS USHERED IN THE AGE OF INFORMATION, OUR WORLD HAS BEEN TRANSFORMED. TWELVE YEARS AFTER THE FIRST WHITE HOUSE CONFERENCE ON LIBRARY AND INFORMATION SERVICES IN 1979, LIFE HAS SPEEDED UP, TO THE POINT WHERE IT OFTEN FEELS AS IF WE LIVE PERMANENTLY STUCK ON FAST FORWARD. BACK THEN DELEGATES PONDERED THE ROLE OF TECHNOLOGY IN PRESERVING BOOKS. THEY EXAMINED THE PART SATELLITE COMMUNICATIONS AND CABLE T.V. MIGHT PLAY IN DISSEMINATING INFORMATION ON A GLOBAL SCALE. AND THEY

PLACED PUBLIC LIBRARIES IN THE VANGUARD OF THE FIGHT FOR ADULT LITERACY.

ALL THESE ISSUES REMAIN AS TIMELY AS EVER. YET THEY HAVE MERGED WITH BROADER CONCERNS. THIS WEEK AND FOR MANY WEEKS LEADING UP TO IT, YOU HAVE CHOSEN TO ADDRESS PRODUCTIVITY, LITERACY AND DEMOCRACY, THEMES AS INSEPARABLY LINKED AS THE WEST POINT CREDO OF DUTY, HONOR, COUNTRY. CERTAINLY IT IS DIFFICULT TO IMAGINE ANY ONE OF THESE FLOURISHING IN A SOCIETY THAT ALLOWS THE OTHERS TO LANGUISH.

MEANWHILE THE PACE OF CHANGE ACCELERATES. BY THE END OF THIS DECADE, WE CAN LOOK FORWARD -- IF THAT IS THE RIGHT WAY OF PHRASING IT -- TO HAVING ACCESS TO TWENTY TIMES AS MUCH INFORMATION AS PRESENTLY SATURATES THE AIRWAVES, DATABASES, FRONT PAGES AND TEXTBOOKS OF ALREADY FRAZZLED AMERICANS. PERHAPS THE GREATEST CHALLENGE BEFORE US IS HOW TO PURSUE TECHNOLOGICAL ADVANCE WITHOUT SURRENDERING OUR BASIC HUMANITY. IN AN AGE OF ROBOTICS, AUTOMATED TELLER MACHINES AND COMPUTER DRIVEN CLASSROOMS, WE NEED INSPIRATION AS MUCH AS INFORMATION, AND FAITH TO MATCH OUR FACTS.

CAN MODERN SOCIETY SHED ITS SKIN WITHOUT LOSING

ITS SOUL? IS IT POSSIBLE TO IMAGINE A COHESIVE NATIONAL CULTURE AMIDST THE DIZZYING VARIETY OF AMERICA ON THE BRINK OF THE 21ST CENTURY? HOW DO WE BRING ORDER OUT OF THE CHAOS OF PROGRESS? HOW TO PRESERVE INDIVIDUALITY WHILE TRAINING CITIZENS TO LIVE IN THE ANCIENT ATHENIAN SENSE – AWARE ALWAYS THAT LIFE HAS A CIVIC COMPONENT AND THAT THE RICHEST CIVILIZATIONS REST ON WISDOM AS MUCH AS KNOWLEDGE – ABOVE ALL HOW TO ATTAIN THE WISDOM TO CHOOSE WAYS OF ACHIEVEMENT THAT DO NOT HURT ONE'S NEIGHBORS?

THE ANSWERS TO THESE AND OTHER TOUGH QUESTIONS ARE AS LIKELY TO EMERGE FROM MEETINGS LIKE THIS AS FROM ANY CONGRESSIONAL HEARING OR POLITICAL CAMPAIGN. FOR WHO IS BETTER EQUIPPED BY TRAINING AND TEMPERAMENT TO FASHION INTANGIBLES OF THE AMERICAN SPIRIT INTO A LOGIC AND A PROGRAM TO HELP SHAPE WHAT EMERSON CALLED "THE COUNTRY OF TOMORROW" THAN OUR LIBRARIANS AND LIBRARY SERVICE PROFESSIONALS.

PRODUCTIVITY. LITERACY. DEMOCRACY. TOGETHER THEY POINT THE WAY TO AN AMERICAN FUTURE DYNAMIC ENOUGH TO BE COMPETITIVE, INCLUSIVE ENOUGH TO BE GENEROUS, AND THOUGHTFUL ENOUGH TO BE TRULY CIVILIZED. HALF A CENTURY AGO THOMAS WOLFE DEFINED AMERICAN ETHIC IN

HIGHLY PERSONAL TERMS. "IF A MAN HAS A TALENT AND CANNOT USE IT," HE WROTE, "HE HAS FAILED. IF HE HAS A TALENT AND USES ONLY HALF OF IT HE HAS PARTLY FAILED. IF HE HAS A TALENT AND LEARNS SOMEHOW TO USE THE WHOLE OF IT, HE HAS GLORIOUSLY SUCCEEDED, AND WON A SATISFACTION AND A TRIUMPH FEW MEN EVER KNOW."

TODAY, OF COURSE, WE CAN REWRITE THE PASSAGE TO READ "A MAN OR A WOMAN." ONLY FAIRLY RECENTLY IN OUR HISTORY HAVE WE REDEEMED THE PROMISES OF EQUAL OPPORTUNITY WRITTEN INTO THE GREAT CHARTERS OF OUR NATIONHOOD, STRIKING DOWN BARRIERS BUILT UPON RACE OR GENDER OR ECONOMIC STATUS OR PHYSICAL CONDITION. WE HAVE DONE SO BECAUSE IT IS RIGHT – AND BECAUSE WE INHABIT A FIERCELY COMPETITIVE WORLD IN WHICH CHANGE IS THE ONLY CONSTANT AND TALENT FAR TOO PRECIOUS TO WASTE.

EVEN AS WE MEET, PRODUCTIVITY IS BEING REDEFINED. AS RECENTLY AS 1955, THE AMERICAN WORKFORCE COUNTED MORE BLUE COLLARS THAN WHITE COLLARS. TODAY A SUBSTANTIAL MAJORITY OF WORKERS HOLD JOBS IN THE INFORMATION BUSINESS. MEANWHILE, THE MORE TECHNOLOGY WE INVENT, THE MORE CRITICAL IT IS FOR PEOPLE TO KEEP IN TOUCH WITH ONE ANOTHER. YESTERDAY'S

ECONOMY FOLLOWED AN ALMOST MILITARY PATTERN: WITH ORDERS COMING FROM THE TOP DOWN, ITS CHIEF PRIORITY BEING CONTROL OVER LARGE, COMPLICATED SYSTEMS. THE NEW ECONOMY STRESSES ADAPTABILITY, EMPLOYEE DEVELOPMENT, QUALITY PERFORMANCE WITHIN MORE SPECIALIZED MARKETS AND THE HUMAN BALANCE AGAINST THE HIGH-TECH BACKGROUND. THE POWER PYRAMID IS GIVING WAY TO THE HORIZONTAL NETWORK.

LITERACY, TOO, HAS AS MANY DEFINITIONS AS ADVOCATES. WE CAN ALL BE GRATEFUL FOR THE REMARKABLE WORK BEING DONE BY OUR FIRST LADY TO RAISE PUBLIC AWARENESS OF THE ISSUE. MRS. BUSH IS RIGHT WHEN SHE DIAGNOSES ILLITERACY AS THE BALL AND CHAIN OF MODERN EXISTENCE. FOR A PERSON WHO CANNOT READ CANNOT BEGIN TO LIVE OR WORK UP TO HIS POTENTIAL. HE IS DENIED MANY OF LIFE'S PLEASURES AND ALL TOO MANY OF ITS NECESSITIES. YET WHAT, PRECISELY, DO WE MEAN BY A LITERATE AMERICA?

MILLIONS OF PEOPLE IN THIS COUNTRY SHY AWAY FROM TECHNOLOGY. THEY FIND IT FRIGHTENINGLY IMPERSONAL, COLD AND INTIMIDATING. ASSUMING THAT SOCIETY HAS A STAKE IN PROMOTING A DIFFERENT ATTITUDE, HOW DO WE CUSHION THE SHOCK OF THE NEW? IS COMPUTER LITERACY A

PREREQUISITE FOR THE FULL LIFE? WHEN ONE-FOURTH OF ALL AMERICAN HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS FAIL TO GRADUATE, WHEN LARGE NUMBERS ARE UNABLE TO FIND THE UNITED STATES ON A MAP OF THE WORLD, WHEN FEWER PEOPLE READ BOOKS AND FEWER BOOKS ASPIRE TO A LIFE LONGER THAN TEN WEEKS ATOP THE NEW YORK TIMES BESTSELLER LIST, HOW ARE WE TO RESPOND?

I DON'T WANT TO PREJUDICE YOUR DEBATE, BUT I CAN HARDLY PASS UP THE OPPORTUNITY TO MAKE MY OWN PITCH FOR HISTORICAL LITERACY. IT'S BEEN SAID THAT HE WHO IS IGNORANT OF EVENTS BEFORE HIS BIRTH MUST REMAIN A CHILD ALWAYS. HISTORY AFFORDS MORE THAN INSPIRATION, ENTERTAINMENT, AND OCCASIONAL CAUSE FOR OUTRAGE. IT PROVIDES A YARDSTICK WITH WHICH TO MEASURE OUR PROGRESS AS A NATION TOWARD KEEPING THOSE GREAT CONSTITUTIONAL PROMISES SOLEMNLY VOWED TWO CENTURIES AGO AND CODIFIED IN THE BILL OF RIGHTS WHOSE BICENTENNIAL WE OBSERVE THIS VERY FALL. IT ENABLES US TO LIVE IN MANY CENTURIES AND CULTURES. IT BROADENS OUR HORIZONS AND DEEPENS OUR SYMPATHIES. MOST IMPORTANT OF ALL, IT FOSTERS CONNECTIONS, BETWEEN NEIGHBORS AND BETWEEN NATIONS, AT A TIME WHEN MUCH OF OUR SOCIETY SEEMS FRAGMENTED AND A PERVASIVE

CHEAPNESS INFECTS OUR THROWAWAY CULTURE.

THE STORY IS TOLD OF ROBERT FROST CONDUCTING A POETRY WORKSHOP AT BREADLOAF IN VERMONT. HE PICKED UP A MANUSCRIPT AND SAID, IN A VOICE HEAVY WITH SARCASM, "WHO WROTE THIS POEM?" A BRAVE YOUNG WOMAN ACKNOWLEDGED AUTHORSHIP, ONLY TO HAVE FROST SAY, IN AN EVEN LOUDER TONE, "NO, I MEAN, WHO REALLY WROTE IT?"

SILENCE AND BEWILDERMENT GREETED THIS CURIOUS INQUIRY. AFTER A LONG PAUSE, DURING WHICH FROST STARED AT THE AUDIENCE AS IF DARING ANYONE TO SPEAK, THE YOUNG WOMAN SPOKE UP. "I WROTE IT," SHE SAID, "AND I DON'T KNOW WHAT YOU'RE TALKING ABOUT."

"YOU DIDN'T WRITE IT," FROST SHOT BACK, WAVING THE TYPED PAGE IN THE AIR. "YOU KNOW WHO WROTE IT?" HE TAUNTED, BEFORE ANSWERING HIS QUESTION WITH THE GREATEST POSSIBLE DISDAIN: "T.S. ELIOT WROTE IT."

FROST WAS A BIT HEAVYHANDED, BUT HIS POINT IS WELL TAKEN. PERHAPS THE WORST THING ABOUT THE MODERN MEDIA IS THE LOWEST COMMON DENOMINATOR FOSTERED AS THE QUALITATIVE NORM. IN PARTNERSHIP WITH THE ARTIST, MUSICIAN, WRITER, AND SCHOLAR, THE LIBRARIAN SUPPLIES AN ANTIDOTE TO MASS MEDIOCRITY, A REFUGE FOR THE TRULY

DISTINCTIVE AND ORIGINAL.

INEVITABLY MUCH OF THE TALK AT THIS CONFERENCE WILL INVOLVE PUBLIC-PRIVATE PARTNERSHIPS. THE CONCEPT IS NOT A NEW ONE. THE AMERICAN LANDSCAPE IS DOTTED WITH STOUT BRICK BUILDINGS, SELF-PROCLAIMED TEMPLES OF CULTURE MADE POSSIBLE THROUGH THE FARSEEING VISION AND DEEP POCKETS OF ANDREW CARNEGIE. IT IS TEMPTING FOR US TO LOOK BACK AT THE UNFETTERED CAPITALISM OF CARNEGIE'S DAY AND CONSIGN THE OLD TYCOON TO THE DISTANT JUMBLE OF OLD PHOTOGRAPHS AND FADED CLIPPINGS FROM THE HISTORICAL SOCIETY VAULT. BUT TO DO SO WOULD OVERLOOK THE BASIC CONNECTIONS THAT LINK US WITH THOSE WHO HAVE GONE BEFORE. FOR WHATEVER ELSE MAY DIVIDE HIS GENERATION FROM OUR OWN, WE SHARE A CONVICTION THAT A SOCIETY'S HIGHEST VALUES ARE NOT TO BE CALCULATED IN DOLLARS AND CENTS.

HE WHO BUILDS A LIBRARY MAKES A STATEMENT. AT THE LEAST, HE ISSUES AN INVITATION TO THAT LIFELONG LEARNING WHICH WE CELEBRATE THIS WEEK. MORE THAN THIS, HOWEVER, HE PROMOTES A COMMON CULTURE AS AN ANTIDOTE TO THE FRAGMENTED WAYS OF THE LATE 20TH CENTURY. BETTER THAN ANY GOVERNMENT PROGRAM, POLITICAL PARTY OR FRATERNAL ORGANIZATION, A LIBRARY

OPENS AVENUES TO SELF-KNOWLEDGE WHILE DIMINISHING OUR PERSONAL ISOLATION. WITHIN ITS WALLS WE ARE ENCOURAGED TO DRAW LINES FROM THE DAY BEFORE YESTERDAY TO THE DAY AFTER TOMORROW.

OUR ANCESTORS BUILT LIVES AS WELL AS LIBRARIES. IN THE PROCESS THEY REMINDED US THAT SO LONG AS BOOKS WERE KEPT OPEN, THEN MINDS COULD NEVER BE CLOSED. A HUNDRED YEARS LATER WE INHABIT AN AGE WHEN SENSATION AND HYPE DOMINATE THE MASS MEDIA. MENTION THE WORD MADONNA AND MORE PEOPLE ARE LIKELY TO CONJURE UP A ROCK STAR THAN A RELIGIOUS EMBLEM. EVERYWHERE WE DETECT A CULTURAL CONFORMITY SWALLOWED LIKE PILLS. YET NOT EVEN THIS HAS BEEN ENOUGH TO OVERCOME THE DIVISIONS AND ALIENATION OF MODERN LIFE.

AT A TIME WHEN GENUINE COMMUNITY IS ELUSIVE, IS IT ANY WONDER THAT MILLIONS FLOCK TO SHOPPING MALLS AND MOVIE SCREENS IN SEARCH OF SOMETHING – ANYTHING – THAT CAN PASS FOR COMMUNAL ACTIVITY? WE PURSUE CONNECTIONS WITH ALL THE POIGNANT INTENSITY OF DOROTHY GALE SEEKING A PATH HOME TO KANSAS – AND OFTEN JUST AS IGNORANT THAT THE OBJECT OF OUR DESIRE IS RIGHT UNDER OUR NOSES. WE COMPLAIN OF A DEADENING MONOTONY THAT SAPS LIFE OF ADVENTURE AND RENDERS

TIME SOMETHING TO KILL INSTEAD OF SAVOR.

BUT NOT IN A LIBRARY AND NOT AMONG BOOKS. IN THE WORDS OF THE POET EMILY DICKINSON, "I DWELL IN POSSIBILITY." ANYONE WHO OPENS A BOOK DWELLS THERE AND NOWHERE ELSE. IT IS NOT TRUE THAT WE HAVE ONLY ONE LIFE TO LIVE. IF WE CAN READ, WE CAN LIVE AS MANY MORE LIVES AND AS MANY KINDS OF LIVES AS WE WISH. JUST AS THE TOUCH OF A BUTTON ON OUR TAPEDECK WILL FILL THE ROOM WITH MUSIC, SO BY OPENING A BOOK WE CAN CALL INTO RANGE THE VOICE OF A MAN OR WOMAN FAR DISTANT IN TIME AND SPACE, HEARING THEM SPEAK TO US, MIND TO MIND, HEART TO HEART.

OPEN A BOOK AND THE CALENDAR BECOMES IRRELEVANT. CODES OF FASHION VANISH LIKE A SNOWDRIFT IN JULY. OPEN A BOOK AND FORGET THE HERD MENTALITY THAT CAN OTHERWISE REDUCE MODERN MEN AND WOMEN TO LITTLE MORE THAN INTERCHANGEABLE PARTS. OPEN A BOOK AND EXCHANGE KANSAS FOR OZ. CHASE A GREAT WHITE WHALE NAMED MOBY DICK. FLOAT DOWN THE BROAD MISSISSIPPI IN THE COMPANY OF HUCK FINN. EXPLORE ROBERT FROST'S NEW HAMPSHIRE, THE LONDON OF NICHOLAS NICKELBY, HEMINGWAY'S SPAIN OR J.R. TOLKIEN'S LAND OF THE HOBBITS.

TRAIL A CRIMINAL WITH AGATHA CHRISTIE. FOLLOW THE

SHIFTING FORTUNES OF BATTLE WITH WINSTON CHURCHILL OR ROBERT E. LEE. REACH FOR THE HEM OF HEAVEN WITH C.S LEWIS. OR REACH INTO THE HEAVENS WITH CARL SAGAN. OPEN A BOOK AND VISIT THE TURBULENT 14TH CENTURY WITH BARBARA TUCHMAN. DISCOVER MICHENER'S HAWAII AND ALASKA. STAND AT GETTYSBURG WITH SANDBURG'S LINCOLN, OR ON OMAHA BEACH WITH IKE. GIVE COMFORT TO THE SOUL BY READING THE BIBLE. WHEN WE OPEN A BOOK, WE ENCOUNTER A WIDER UNIVERSE THAN WE EVER DREAMED POSSIBLE. AND WE UNCOVER CONNECTIONS THAT LINK US AS FELLOW PASSENGERS ON A JOURNEY THAT BEGAN LONG BEFORE CARNEGIE'S TIME, AND WILL CONTINUE FAR BEYOND THE NEXT ELECTION, PUBLISHING CYCLE OR WHITE HOUSE CONFERENCE.

LIBRARIES SERVE MANY FUNCTIONS. THEY INSTRUCT AND ENTERTAIN, INFORM AND INSPIRE. THEY GATHER THE WISDOM OF THE AGES AND THE DIVERSION OF A SUMMER AFTERNOON. BUT IF THEY HAVE A SINGLE OVERRIDING PURPOSE, IT IS TO CONNECT US WITH THE PEOPLE AND PLACES, THE IDEAS AND EXPERIENCES THAT TOGETHER ENRICH OUR LIVES, DEEPEN OUR HUMANITY AND DESIGNATE US GUARDIANS OF A GLORIOUS HERITAGE. THEY STAND AS BRIDGES TO WHAT HAS BEEN AND GATEWAYS TO WHAT MAY YET BE. THEY ASSERT IN

BRICK AND GLASS, IN STORY HOURS AND EVENING CLASSES, THAT WE WILL NOT BE SEVERED FROM OUR ROOTS.

HERE, THEN, IS A SERVICE UNIQUELY ENTRUSTED TO THE LIBRARY AND INFORMATION SERVICES PROFESSION. WITHOUT EVER CLOSING YOUR EYES TO THE REAL WORLD, YOU OPEN OUR EYES TO AN IDEAL ONE. OUTSIDE YOUR WALLS, THE WORLD CAN AT TIMES SEEM A CHILLY PLACE. INSIDE WE CAN WARM OURSELVES BY THE FIRE OF OLD MEMORY AND THE SPARK OF A CHILD'S CURIOSITY. HOWEVER DISCONNECTED MODERN LIFE MAY APPEAR, IN A LIBRARY WE CAN FIND THE VALUES AND THE VISIONS THAT MAKE US ONE PEOPLE, STUNNINGLY DIVERSE IN BELIEF AND BACKGROUND, YET UNITED IN OUR COMMITMENT TO THE LIMITLESS POSSIBILITIES OF THE INDIVIDUAL. LIVES MAY END, CUSTOMS MAY CHANGE, FADS COME AND GO. BUT BOOKS LIVE ON, TO CAST THEIR GLOW OF INSPIRATION AND PERSPECTIVE. AND BY THAT LIGHT WE CAN ALL FIND OUR WAY HOME.

REMARKS OF

WILLIAM T. ESREY
CHAIRMAN AND CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER
UNITED TELECOMMUNICATIONS, INC.

THE WHITE HOUSE CONFERENCE
ON LIBRARY AND INFORMATION SERVICES

WASHINGTON CONVENTION CENTER
JULY 10, 1991

EMBARGOED UNTIL 2:00 p.m.

For additional information, Steve Dykes, 202-828-7435

THE WHITE HOUSE CONFERENCE ON LIBRARY AND INFORMATION SERVICES

William T. Esrey, Chairman & CEO, Sprint/United

July 10, 1991

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Thank you for that kind introduction, and good afternoon, everyone. It's an honor to be here.

This is a particularly interesting time for a conference. Just one week ago today, the New York Times had a feature article on the use of PCs and nationwide data networks to access sources of information as large as the Library of Congress ... or ... to receive personalized electronic newspapers. The article suggested that electronic database searches were easier than consulting a card catalog.

Also last week, the Wall Street Journal noted that a Wellesley, Massachusetts firm offered weekly editions of the Federal Register on a compact disk.

Obviously, our world is changing -- and those of us whose profession it is to deliver useful information to our customers, on demand ...must change too.

I'd like to step back for a moment ... and pose a question. Who do you think wrote this poem? I'll read just a couple of lines.

More than iron, more than lead
More than gold -- I need electricity.
I need it... for my dreams.

Can you guess the author? Okay, it's not Shakespeare.

But those words may take on some depth when you hear this little autobiographical description written by the poet.

I am silicon and epoxy energy enlightened by a line current.

Yes... it was written by... a computer. Named Racter. Racter wrote a whole book, in fact, called 'The Policeman's Beard is Half-Constructed,' and I'd be hard-pressed to know where to file *that* in the stacks.

Under Author? Well... who exactly is that? Racter? IBM? Or the fellow who wrote the software?

Just *who* produced this little poem may not seem such a big deal... but the question represents a much larger one our society struggles with today.

And that is, does the nature of productivity change... now that the human *mind* can extend itself through revolutionary tools like the computer, just as the human *body* did through machinery during the Industrial Revolution?

Most of you see evidence every day... that the answer is yes -- that the nature of productivity in our modern society is indeed changing.

Part of that change is found in the way we seek out information that's needed to get a job done.

As you well know, a single database search can leave you neck-high in statistics. I discovered *that* when, in preparing for this speech, I had our corporate librarian, Desi Bravo, do a routine search on productivity for me. Let me tell you... the system kicked out enough information to sink the Bismarck.

Fortunately, Desi's very good at what she does, and she performed her duty as information counselor very well... she lifted a melody out from all the background noise.

It seems to me... that's precisely the role of a corporate library in the 90s. As a businessman... who was asked to speak about productivity... I would say the people who manage the distillation and distribution of information in this country... play an absolutely critical role in helping American businesses reach a higher quality of productivity... and compete on a global plane.

Notice I said higher *quality* of productivity. I believe there's going to be a greater focus on the quality of products and services from here on out... because quality, more than quantity, is going to be the hallmark of successful competitors in the future. It's the quality that makes you stand out.

There's no exception when it comes to libraries.

It's pretty obvious that the information counselor's job is going to get tougher... even more sophisticated... as information plays a bigger and bigger role in productivity -- and becomes more integrated with the basic management process.

Part of the productivity equation these days, for companies of all description, is *information as a resource*, just like lumber or steel or cable or even capital.

In fact, somewhere along the way, information goes into virtually every product I can think of today.

When Henry Ford first built a production line, the customer could have any color of the Model T -- so long as it was black. Today one needs to serve a market that wants practically every product to be unique ... and it can only be done through the use of information technology.

The John Deere production line in Waterloo, Iowa ... for instance... is so flexible, it can build thirty different tractor models all at once, in the same run. That's 3,000 options on one assembly line ... and among those options is -- you guessed it -- color.

In businesses like mine, of course, things get a little more abstract. Instead of red tractors, customers want flexible telecommunications services. But the principle is the same. Information -- current and correct market information -- is part of the process of defining and delivering the product.

And maybe the most important part it plays has to do with enhancing quality ... as defined by the customer. Quality is one of those elusive things that information can greatly affect in the production process. You see, in the world of quality management, it's not good enough to produce *efficiently*. Companies also have to produce reliable, highly desired goods and services ... and deliver them to the customer in a timely fashion.

Ultimately, that depends on having the right market information initially ... and then minimizing the number of mistakes you make. Mistakes can cost you in two ways. They either slip by and cost you a *customer*... or they're caught -- corrected -- and cost you *time and money*. Either way, you pay.

So today, it's not just the *number* of units you produce that matters. It's the number of *flawless* units. That means we're changing how we measure output. Now, it's measured by the number of things you make that you don't have to fix or discard -- and it's also measured by the revenues you hold on to when you keep a customer in your corner.

The ultimate cost of operating a company depends on minimizing the mistakes that have to be corrected -- and on maximizing what the customer wants in a product or service. That's what quality has to do with productivity.

Which brings me back to the John Deere factory. To be competitive today... companies are learning to manufacture a small number of customized products in job lots, and are able to respond to specialized customer demands almost instantly.

I'll bet very few Americans know that today, three-quarters of the physical products made in this country are made in runs of less than fifty items each. Rote manufacturing is out... flexible manufacturing -- building what the customer wants -- when the customer wants it -- is in.

Now, in a world where competitors are so nimble, job one is to be current. You have to practically watch your markets every moment of every day to monitor their shifts and changes. Likewise, you need a steady flow of information on the resources you draw on to serve those markets.

There was a recent story in the paper about the music promoters getting upset because radio stations are getting compact disc sales information in real-time... and creating their programs based on what people are currently buying. Well, promoters are unhappy because this upsets the traditional cycle of record companies identifying artists with potential... then investing in creating images for them... then choreographing their stardom through a cycle of air play and promotions. So, another industry if changed as a result of a different information flow.

Marketing departments everywhere want -- and desperately need -- information about consumers.

In days long gone, the person who provided information to businesses -- as well as scientists and others -- was the classic librarian, who managed a lending library... made of brick and mortar... and sometimes ivy. Things were much slower then.

Today, thanks to a confluence of factors (including services like those my company offers the OCLC and others) so-called 'libraries without walls' are becoming a reality that can serve up instant-awareness to their clients... regardless of location or time zone.

In some fields, the half-life of technical information can be as short as three months. In fact, in certain high-tech industries, the patent process is becoming a waste of time. By the time they're applied for and approved -- the technology is already obsolete!

Now, as this avalanche of information grows even more overwhelming... and as the technologies supporting it become more advanced... the challenge is for companies just to keep up.

As information takes its rightful seat at the head table in the executive suite... the people who support its delivery... necessarily are taking their rightful places at the heart of the organization.

That means people like *me*... are restructuring our thinking... about people like *you*. Businesses are finding it necessary to give their information centers the resources they need... to move from the old-fashioned, reactive, repository function... to the on-line, proactive process of information management.

At Sprint, we are developing a much larger vision of what must be done to manage all the information at our disposal. And that's going to involve changing people's ideas of what information technology is all about -- throughout the organization.

First of all, even in the age of artificial intelligence, it's machines that serve humans. Not the other way around. Technology is merely the lens to magnify that human effort. It doesn't run the show.

There's a legendary sign hanging in IBM's Tokyo offices that speaks volumes. It essentially says:

Computers: Fast -- Accurate -- Stupid.
People: Slow -- Slovenly -- Smart.

It's true. Computers and other information technologies generally *can't* do people's jobs.

Libraries will realize their full potential in companies like mine when everybody gets used to the notion that information technology can be a window to the rest of the organization... that the synthesis of people and computers means speed and accuracy -- along with creativity and good judgment.

I can say from experience, the PC on my desk has changed my job forever. It used to be, I'd read a report... and if I had a question, I'd call one of my staff -- and often would have to leave a message.

Eventually, my request would get through, and be bumped down through organizational lines until it finally got to someone who actually knew something about it!

It would slowly spiral down through our departmental depths, and the answer -- the result, no doubt, of anxiety, politics and zealous editing -- would spiral back up and surface on my desk sometimes days later.

Well, *these* days, I sit down at my desk... log into our corporate-wide computer system... tap into the data I need... and E-mail any questions I might have directly to the subject-matter expert, who might be six doors, six miles, six countries -- or if you want to get *really* distant -- six organizational layers -- away.

You know what's gonna happen? One of these days soon, there won't *be* six organizational layers left in the company. Already, our chart's looking flatter. I happen to think that's a very good thing... and I suspect Sprint customers will agree.

So the simple act of using my computer has made Sprint more productive. Not just me. The *whole company*... because it's removed slack and error from a far-reaching process. It's made our organization more efficient.

The crux of the matter is that information technology isn't just a power tool. It doesn't mean simply automating the status quo. It means looking at every process underlying the organization... in a whole new light.

Which brings us back to the notion of quality. What begins to emerge is a new concept of what quality means -- something beyond just reliability of a product or service. It begins to take on shades of customer satisfaction.

Remember the old line -- 'Fast, good, cheap: Pick any two'? How about, 'Fast, good, cheap: you get all three'? *That's* how people see quality today. A reliable... relevant... good value. And the way you achieve it is by removing slack and error from your processes... like I did when I first began to realize the productivity-enhancing potential of my desktop computer.

Errors can be inherent in any system or process. For example... Mazda went into a joint venture with Ford recently, and when they compared operations, it turned out Mazda's accounts payable department was five times more efficient.

Upon closer examination, the reason was simple. Other companies have found the same thing. If a step or a process doesn't add value, it's a flaw... a defect that's eventually going to show up on the bottom line.

It doesn't matter where or what it is. It could be a duplicate invoice. It could be an obsolete inventory procedure. It could be a game of telephone tag -- or an unfilled order. Using every tool, from common sense to computers... you've got to hunt that defect down and shoot it. At Sprint, that's our total-quality philosophy, and its aim is customer satisfaction.

Obviously, we're not the only ones doing this. It's a big movement in business.

Since Motorola undertook a rigorous, quality improvement program, they've become the world's largest cellular-phone manufacturer; they've dominated Japan's telephone-pager market; and they've grown sales and earnings by more than 20 percent each.

Xerox reports that since their quality program started, customer satisfaction is up; defects are down. They're the first American company to regain market share in an industry Japan has publicly targeted for invasion.

And best of all, Xerox has cut the time it takes to bring a new idea to market by *more than half*... and they are still not satisfied.

IBM has cut their manufacturing cycle time in half, too, since they instituted a quality program in 1983. When they streamlined, they got a nice side benefit -- a threefold increase in reliability, which lets them *quadruple* their warranties from eight years ago.

(Pause)

The final observation I want to make about what productivity means to business in the coming decade... has a lot to do with partnership... communities of knowledge... sharing information.

It starts internally. Information from the sales and marketing staff feeds the engineers... whose innovations need to be understood by the financial people... whose ability to raise capital depends on how well-satisfied the customers are... which depends on how well-scheduled the company's deliveries are... which depends in part on employee motivation...and on-and-on.

Connectivity, rather than disconnectiveness. Integration, rather than disintegration. Community, rather than independence.

That idea resonates not only through any modern concept of productivity... it also happens to be a motto of sorts for my company. We call ourselves 'the best partner in the world.'

The way we figure it, the information cart is too big for any one horse to pull all alone. Witness IBM and Apple -- mortal enemies, rivals -- talking about a joint venture. That fact alone speaks volumes.

We believe that collaborating... makes us all more creative... more productive... because ideas can bounce off each other... and maybe lead to better ideas.

I think that's central to the concept of a 'library without walls.'

You're used to the idea. You work with it every day. For example, you collaborate through Internet... which has 5,000 international library networks... a million host computers... and tens of millions of users.

Information professionals also communicate through OCLC, which (as I mentioned) Sprint supplies... and through the National Foundation of Science network. Later in the decade, you will have an additional resource -- the National Research and Education Network... with its ubiquitous coverage. Sprint plans to connect this network with its overseas peers in Europe when it comes on-line in 1996.

Together, we're building an invisible powerhouse out there... a kind of global mind... and libraries are the bulk of its gray matter.

How exactly does business expect our information resources to fit in?

Well... we've talked about radical change today. Not just shifts here and there... but systemic upheaval... all based on the library's lifeblood -- *information*. This new order, where information is such a powerful currency, is going to put great stress on every seam of society's enterprises.

Modern companies will transfer a good bit of the responsibility for trading, in this new kind of currency, to our library professionals... the people who synthesize, catalog, retrieve and distribute information.

As a result, communication needs to be strong -- within the organization... and with the outside world as well.

Those people who oversee our storehouses of information really have to have a deep and broad view of industry. They need to understand what all the different piece-parts of the company do and need... so they know what to watch for and can respond quickly when managers ask for information.

But their responsibility goes beyond that. With today's information overload, managers don't always know what useful information's available... and may not even recognize it at first. I said at the beginning that Sprint's corporate librarian lifted out a melody for me, from a sea of information noise.

But doing that means corporate library professionals have to monitor and sift through a river of information as it comes flowing by... in order to identify and select key information corporate decision-makers should see... and channel that information to the right people -- *before* it becomes necessary to ask for it.

The responsibility goes all around, of course. Managers need to understand how to ask researchable questions.

But the responsibility lies with librarians, too. It's very important for information professionals to take the initiative and become an on-stream participant in a company's problem-solving process.

You've got some big issues to explore over the next few days. Issues that go to the heart of our concerns about democracy... literacy... and information management. You're going to consider some meaningful and lofty themes.

I hope that as you do... you keep in mind... not only do the principles of society's governance and its bestowing of wisdom absolutely depend on the channels you manage... but that also the ability of our national economic engine to function depends on you as well.

Your work is highly valued -- and you have never been more critical to our nation's ability to compete in the global marketplace.

(Pause.)

Have a great conference ... and thank you.

Keynote Address of Mary Futrell
Wednesday, July 11, 1991

Thank you very much.

In order for democracy to survive in American or any where else in the world a nation must ensure that all of its citizens have access to education,. information and the opportunity to become fully active participants in society.

People, I believe that school was and is the primary through not the only means of ensuring that Americans become literate. However, education as you well know does not take place simply in buildings we call schools. We acquire information, knowledge and skills from numerous sources. We acquire it from our family and friends, from the media from our work, from observing and listening and the list could go on and on.

In contemporary America however, perhaps one of the most underutilized and perhaps overlooked sources of information and knowledge, whether from private or public sources is our library. I am convinced that if we as a nation are to retain our leadership role in the world than we must individually and collectively make a renewed commitment to improve the quality and level of literacy in America.

We must start with how we educate Americans, how we use information to gain a better understanding of who we are and the world in which we live and that commitment must not simply come from librarians and from educators, it must come from every segment of our society and especially from our elected representatives.

Some of you might say, Mary, what brought about the concensus that we need to renew our commitment to literacy. I submit to you that that concensus was brought about by a number events which occured during the 1980s.

Number one, everyone in this room remembers that on October the 19th, 1987 the stock market fell by our 500 points and our nation came to terms with that jolt and we began to understand that our economic situation is intertwined with economies all over the world and we began to improve our understanding of economic literacy.

Number two we began to understand that if the Japanese continue their stunning economic serge that it would have tremendous implications for this country.

Number three we begin to say that what if the USSR is able to keep it efforts to radically change its economic systems on track and to get rid of monolithic communism and if they are able to restructure their nation, economically, politically and socially, the implications for America will be tremendous.

And fourthly, we began to say to ourselves that if the western European countries complete their revolutionary program to scrap barriers to trade, employment and investment then they will have in place an economic market which will be comparable to the United States and Japan combined.

And so the question we asked ourselves than and continue to ask ourselves now, the question is what are the implications for America?

I believe that these scenarios taught us that our whole way of living will become dysfunctional unless we learn and accept the fact that America's greatest resources are found in her people, all 258 million of us. Some of you are thinking, Mary what does all this have to do with literacy? I submit to you that it has everything to do with our system of education, our system of training and system of literacy. It has everything to do with preparing citizens to live and to work in a world which will be vastly different from the one which we now live in and the one which we grow up in.

Due to extensive media coverage and to some degree the direct input of the economic and geopolitical changes occuring worldwide Americans are more aware of the globalization of business and the internationalization of telecommunications. However, I must submit to you that we as a nation appear to be less aware and less ready to address the fact that these developments will lead to a redefination of literacy and of how we educate American citizens.

And whether we want to expect the fact or not, the way we learn, where we learn and what we learn will be directly effected by an era when transnational corporations finance projects, manufacture products, market goods and recruit workers across geographic boundaries. And as American corporations conduct more and more of their business overseas and use employees from all over the world you and I must find better ways to prepare people in this country, especially our students, to compete in an international job market; Whether the jobs are in the United States or abroad.

Secondly, as we face the challenges of this changes we must do so with the full realization that recent demographic and societal changes will make our task more complex but not insurmountable. The United States of America has long been recognized as one of the most pluralistic, most diverse in the industrial world. I believe that our diversity and our pluralism are characteristics which have made us unique among nations. And that diversity--and when most people hear the world diversity they think we're talking about race, but when we talk about diversity we are talking about age, race, gender, religion, culture and many things--But that diversity is projected to increase during the 21st century.

For example, currently 30% of all school children in America, come from racial or cultural minority families. It is predicted that by the early part of the 21st century that percentage will increase to 35%. And this country, we represent every religious denominations that can be worshipped. We have over 100 different languages spoken in our schools. We represent all different types of exceptionalities, from the gifted and talented, to those with learning difficulties, to those with physical disabilities. The people we represent come from every economic class, every gender group and every culture. They represent America, and they are the people who will be the future of America.

And unless trends change it is projected by the earliest part of the 21st century, a short ten years from now, a full fifty percent of all children will come from families living in poverty. And for many of these children they do not have access to books magazines and newspapers. The only time they will have access to them is in schools and public libraries. And some of you might say, Mary, why don't they have access. Well, when you're living on the edge of life, when you are barely holding on, you can not afford to buy books, you can not afford to buy magazines and computers are out of the question.

According to Andrew Barber, in his article, *Meeting the Literacy Challenge*, there are at least 23 million functionally illiterate people in this nation today, fully 10 percent of the population. The drop-out rate which is in effect a second measure of the state of literacy, stands at nearly 30 percent. Approximately one million of our young people drop out of school before they graduate and probably another million have they brains on cruise control.

And meanwhile the jobs are getting more complicated and the competition stiffer, here and aboard. A growing number of Americans have fallen into the abyss of illiteracy and an increasing number of our young people seem to be drifting though life with no sense of purpose, no conceptions, no aspirations, and little hope for the future. And these are our young people and for whatever reason they have not only dropped out of school they have dropped out of life.

Seventy percent of the the men and women in prison have dropped out of school and do not have skills for the most basic jobs. And so sometimes they become consumed by unemployment and by crime. If a person can not read and write properly, they can not participate in the education process. Much less take a job, much less take advantage of rights and privileges we take for granted. And further, they do not have basic skills, they can not be retrained unless those skills are brought up to a level of which they can participate in the basic programs.

And unfortunately, a large percentage of the people I am talking about are poor. And contrary to what everybody believes, the vast majority of poor people in this country are white they are not minorities. We happen to be concentrated in the cities and so often it appears we are the ones who are most poor.

The vast majority of the children in our country do live healthy normal lives, however the children I have described will increasingly define what we mean when we talk about democracy. Third, technology, no less than demographics, will also be a major factor in our efforts to control our destiny as a nation entering a new century.

Never before have schools faced such rapid race of technological change, never before has technology so directed effected the way we learn. And today never before has technology and never before has information has so drastically effected our lives. And yet you and I know that technology and information not only reshapes the way schools and libraries function. But technology and information will reshape the way the world functions.

These developments, although incomplete, amount to nothing less than a massive reshaping of the geopolitical landscape and should these developments reach fruition the results would be a brand new world. In the past the emphasis has been on achieving a high rate of literacy for some people, now the emphasis must be on investing in every man, woman and children in America to make sure that they can become as literate that they can become.

And we must say to the people in America that the effort to make this country more literate must be reflected in a commitment with the understanding that it will be enforced and that it will a sustained period of implementation to become a reality. It will not occur overnight. It must be clear to all Americans that the goal must not be focused solely on access to information, access to education, but on quality programs and quality learning opportunities for all. I would submit to you that education will be a major part of efforts to provide opportunities for the people of this country to become literate. However, I am also among the first to admit that while education is a critical aspect, we must not deceive ourselves into believing that it is the only solution.

H.L. Minken said that to every complex problem there corresponds a simple solution which is invariably wrong. The problems we face must be addressed on many fronts and must be one which will involve not only librarians and teachers and administrators and counselors but it must involve the government, it must involve the corporate world, it must involve all of us as individuals.

And as we move to try to make America more literate, we must make use number two that we have in place well-trained professionals who are well-trained to work with Americans from pre-school to adult education programs in every single community in this country. We must make sure that these people understand that its not a matter a simply checking out a book or helping someone find a magazine. But it is a matter of taking the time to help young people, old people, anyone who needs the help to become literate.

And third is we aspire to improve the quality of education and the life of our citizens, young and old. We must do so in an environment that reinforces the ideals of pluralism, of diversity and of opportunity.

And we must say to our governments, at the local levels, at the state level, and at the national level that every citizen in every community should have access to libraries to information and that no citizen should be denied access to information simply because of where he or she lives or the amount of money he or she earns.

I know that there are many who are going to say, Mary, we simply do not have the financial resources to accomplish what you have described. We do not have the resources to guarantee that every American will have access to a library. And that every American will have access to quality education. Well, my friends, I would submit to you that we do not have the ability not to invest in education, not to invest in literacy.

I believe that we as a nation, that we do indeed have the resources, that we need to reorder our priorities so that more of the funds will go into helping America become more literate. The first time the federal government invested in public libraries was 1956, and we said then and we should repeat and say it now, that libraries are a vital part of making our citizens more liberated.

But I am sad to say to you that during recent years we have seen just the reverse. And I know that some people would say that Mary maybe you shouldn't come to this Conference and talk about the realities of what is happening. But I think that you asked me to come because you want me to tell you the truth. And so I will tell you the truth. During the last decade, we have seen the funds for libraries, for library services as well as the funds for education cut. We have seen them reduced drastically. And in the 1980s we saw budget proposals go forth calling for no funds, no funds for library services in this country. And when I saw this I said to myself, how can you advocate being literate, when that is the most illiterate statement I've ever seen.

And when I submit to you, that if it had not been for people like Major Owens, the only librarian serving in Congress, if it had not been for groups like the American Library Association and the National Education Association that the funds for the libraries would have been reduced to zero. I am here to say to you today that what we often hear about in this country is that we need leadership, I believe that we have leadership, but we must also say to them that you must have the political will and the guts to stand up for America, to stand up for the people and especially to stand up for the children, to believe in the children.

And by believing in them, we must say that we will invest in you and our greatest investment will be in your education. John Gardner once said that a nation is never finished, you can not build it and leave in stating as the pharaohs did with the pyramids, it has to be rebuilt by believing, caring men and women. It is now your turn. If we don't care, nothing can save the Nation. If we believe and if we care, nothing can stop us. This is called nation-building. It is now my turn and your turn to say to the people of this country that we will make this nation more humane, more just and more secure and we will do it through education, we will do it by making sure that every single American is literate and that he or she can participate fully in our society.

Let me leave you with the words of Hillel, Hillel said that if I am not for myself than who will me for be, but if I am only for myself what am I? And if not now, when?

If you are not for yourselves as men and as women, as librarians, as Americans, who will be for you. But if all you care about is yourself and your nice little quiet abode where you tell people to come in, I will help you, but please don't talk. And you really don't care whether they understand and whether they develop their full potential, then what are you. And if you will not stand up and say to the people of this country that investing in the literacy of every American is the , the greatest heritage we could give our country, than when will you stand.

Thank you very much.

KEYNOTE ADDRESS

CONGRESSMAN MAJOR R. OWENS

*The White House Conference on Library
and Information Services*

"LIBRARIES IN AMERICA 2000"

Wednesday, July 10, 1991

Washington Convention Center
Washington, DC

LIBRARIES IN AMERICA 2000

Fellow delegates, observers, and all who care about education and libraries, welcome to this very brief but vital White House summit of our citizens. This assembly which meets only once each decade is indeed a very serious gathering. We who care about democracy, education and libraries have a vital mission for America. All who want to see more education take place in a "learning society" and a "nation of students" must go forth with a vital message for America.

There are some self-evident truths about the process of learning that are being overlooked as our leaders prepare to transform the education effort in our nation. Our mission is to go forward with the vital message that libraries still make a great contribution to our democracy by providing the most education for the least amount of money.

Literacy and productivity are very necessary for the strengthening of our democracy. Basic literacy, information literacy, computer literacy; literacy of all kinds enhances productivity. And productivity guarantees that our enterprises will be retained here at home to provide jobs for American workers who are also *the consumers who keep our economy healthy. And nothing bolsters democracy like a healthy economy. Citizens who have a stake in society, citizens who don't have to struggle daily for survival, citizens with some time to breathe free; these are the people, the volunteers, the voters who make our democratic institutions work. Literacy, productivity, democracy; it's all connected.*

Undergirding all three of these components, cementing literacy, productivity, and democracy together is education. The President has launched a great crusade to improve education in America. Improving literacy, improving productivity, and increasing the capacity of all citizens to participate in our democracy are parts of the President's master plan. It is all connected.

Education is presently on center stage in Washington. In the months ahead the debates will escalate and spread rapidly. Our mission, indeed, it is the sacred duty of all who care about libraries; at this conference we must develop ways to add our voices to this critical dialogue. As some of the most enlightened among our nation's citizens we must insist that all discussions of the future of education in America are deficient, defective, and distorted if they do not include a significant role for libraries.

An America in the year 2000 without upgraded, modernized and accessible libraries and public information systems will be comparable to a human body without a backbone and skeleton. Without libraries our expanding educational reform efforts, no matter how well-intentioned, will collapse in a monstrous swollen mass.

Not only must we remember that libraries provide the most education for the least amount of money, we must also remind all of the education decision makers of America that the habit of reading, and the habit of using the library, and the habit of learning are inextricably interwoven.

Students who do not read can not learn. Students who enjoy reading learn faster and more consistently. Children who are in close proximity with books in their home libraries or their school libraries or their public libraries learn to read faster and they read more as they grow older. These are undisputed facts. These are simple but self-evident truths.

The facts and the truth are on our side but nevertheless our mission is a difficult one. Giant contradictions stand blocking our common sense message *to America. Led by the President and the Governors there is a great crusade to transform education in America. We applaud this highly desirable undertaking. But even while the momentum for educational change is mounting they are cutting the budgets of libraries all over America. They are firing librarians; they are wrecking library schedules; they are smothering book acquisition funds; they are closing libraries; this is happening all over America.*

These developments represent a malignant and ugly contradiction. If the habit of reading and the habit of using libraries and the habit of learning are inextricably interwoven, then how can we destroy the effectiveness of libraries while at the same time we are striving to create "a learning society," "a nation of students"? How can we declare our libraries a non-essential service while we are striving to strengthen our democracy?

America 2000 is the label they have placed on the President's master plan for the transformation of education in America. At the heart of this national blueprint is the set of six national education goals. All of these goals involve the reading and information searching skills which are encouraged and sustained by libraries.

AMERICA'S EDUCATION GOALS

By the year 2000...

1. *All children in America will start school ready to learn.*
2. *The high school graduation rate will increase to at least 90 percent.*
3. *American students will leave grades four, eight, and twelve having demonstrated competency in challenging subject matter including English, mathematics, science, history, and geography; and every school in America will ensure that all students learn to use their minds well, so they may be prepared for responsible citizenship, further learning, and productive employment in our modern economy.*
4. *U.S. students will be first in the world in science and mathematics achievement.*
5. *Every adult American will be literate and will possess the knowledge and skills necessary to compete in a global economy and exercise the rights and responsibilities of citizenship.*

6. Every school in America will be free of drugs and violence and will offer a disciplined environment conducive to learning.

Goal #1: By the year 2000, all children in America will start school ready to learn.

Libraries are essential to the achievement of this goal. Education research indicates that the single most important activity in preparing pre-school children to read is reading aloud to them. Studies by Durkin (1966), Chomsky (1972), Goldfield and Snow (1984) and others have found that both the sheer quantity of the material read to a young child and the continued use of progressively more advanced reading material are directly related to the extent of that child's "reading readiness" skills when he or she enters school. A study by William Teale, however, found that too many young children are missing out on this essential element of literacy preparation.

Libraries work to fill this gap by exposing young children and their parents and other caregivers to the wide variety of children's literature they need to develop their "reading readiness" skills. Many also provide training to parents *and caregivers on how to select appropriate reading materials and how best to use them with children. They are shown not just how to read to their children, but how to read with them.*

o The Howard County (MD) Public Library"s BABYWISE program, for example, has developed a series of teaching kits which they regularly deliver along with books, toys, and educational games to family day care providers in the community.

o The Hennepin County (MN) Public Library conducts workshops for family day care providers on the selection and use of children's literature which the county social services agency has made a part of its in-service training requirement for providers.

o The Brooklyn Public Library's Children's place program serves 45,000 preschool children and their caregivers every year. The staff teaches parents, day care providers and others how to prepare their children to read and learn.

o The Jacksonville (FL) Public Library conducts regular reading workshops for functionally illiterate parents and their children. While their children attend a story hour program, their parents are taught how to read, using the same books their children are listening to. Later, the parents then read the story to their children.

o The Rogue River (OR) Public Library has an outreach program in which volunteers visit the families of newborns to give them a library card, deliver a presentation on the services of the library for parents of young children, and instruct them on how to read to children.

GOAL #2: By the year 2000, the high school graduation rate will increase to at least 90 percent.

An estimated 14 to 25 percent of students entering high school nationwide will drop out before they finish. Research indicates that youth who are the most likely to drop out are those who are the least prepared academically and the least involved in school activities. Libraries have been playing an active role in targeting special services to these students to help improve their academic *performance and prevent them from dropping out of school.*

In Shawnee Mission, Kansas, the public and school district libraries have joined forces to sponsor an 8-week summer reading program for elementary and middle-school students. Every year about 2,500 students participate in the program, each averaging five visits to the library during the summer.

In South Carolina, public libraries sponsor 2,007 summer reading programs for low-income children attending summer food program sites. Over 46,000 children participated last summer.

In Illinois, public libraries sponsor summer literacy programs for 1st through 5th graders who have met minimum requirements for promotion but are behind in their reading skills.

In Baltimore, the Enoch Pratt Public Library operates three homework centers in which volunteers provide assistance to students in completing their assignments and offer a wide selection of books and materials which *supplement the regular curriculum.*

In Decatur, Georgia, the DeKalb Public Library operates a Homework and Study Center for students during after-school hours and on weekends. Library staff, which includes experienced teachers, provide homework help to students. Typewriters, computers, calculators and other equipment is available for students to do their work with. Books and other materials, including educational software and videos, are provided which are designed to complement the instruction students receive in the classroom.

The Cambridge (MA) Public Library operates a Books for Homeless Children program which provides books, cassette tapes, and story hours in Boston homeless shelters.

GOAL #3: By the year 2000, American students will leave grades 4, 8, and 12 having demonstrated competency over challenging subject matter, including English, mathematics, science, history, and geography..."

Report after report on educational reform in recent years has proclaimed *the importance of re-orienting our current curricula and methods of instruction to better develop "information literacy", the new set of skills which are required in a knowledge-based economy.*

Inevitably, libraries must be central to developing these new information access skills and facilitating the lifelong learning that has become an economic imperative. As one library educator put it: "If the challenge is to learn how to learn and how to place one's learning within a broader societal and information environment, then libraries and their resources become the logical center for such learning."

Mainstream educators are, to some extent, only just now discovering what library professionals have known all along. Over the last thirty years, the library science community has produced a solid body of research which has established the link between access to and regular use of a library with academic achievement at the elementary, secondary, and postsecondary level. These studies have established that students who have access to a library staffed by a full-time professional and who are given instruction in its use read more often, score better on standardized tests, and have superior reading, spelling, *vocabulary, and comprehension skills to those of other students.*

GOAL #4: By the year 2000, U.S. students will be first in the world in mathematics and science achievement.

All of the recent reports concerning the crisis in math and science education have focused on the need to reconfigure our current authoritarian instructional approach in which "teachers prescribe and students transcribe"--to one in which there is greater participation and hands-on learning by students. Libraries and their resources are essential partners in this new, more interactive method of instruction. They provide multimedia materials to supplement classroom instruction and offer a non-competitive environment in which independent, self-directed learning is facilitated. The Whitehall (MT) High School library worked with the school's science department to develop a Videotaping through Microscopes program to enhance student participation in difficult microbiology experiments and in learning how to use the microscope. The exemplary Discover Rochester program effectively teaches math, science, and other concepts to at-risk 8th graders by exploring various facets of the Rochester environment through group and individual research projects that rely *heavily on the resources of local libraries and archives. Libraries contribute to math and science instruction in other, more unexpected ways as well as by introducing math and science teachers to literature outside their disciplines which may be useful in the classroom. Some of the most promising new curricula in elementary math instruction, for example, draws on such disparate sources as Gulliver's Travels and Haitian and African folk tales for math problems.*

Public and school libraries also promote math and science education by using new technologies to give teachers, students, and parents greater access to science and math information and resources. The Radnor High School library in Pennsylvania, for example, instructs science students in the use of electronic databases like DIALOG for performing science research. Automated bibliographic networks allow users to identify, locate, and obtain highly specialized information from libraries throughout the nation.

A number of libraries also sponsor instructional television networks which provide instructional programming to the classroom and to the community at large. In Leon County, Florida, for example, the library-sponsored instructional *television network offered a series of after-school programs designed to help students with their homework and to familiarize and involve parents with what their children are learning in the classroom.*

Libraries also provide students and their families with free access to microcomputers and other expensive information technologies which they may not be able to purchase on their own. Last year 44,000 people used the free Apple microcomputers offered by the New York Public Library at 54 locations, many of them students working on classroom assignments. The library is the only place in all of New York City where microcomputers can be used for free.

GOAL #5: By the year 2000, every adult American will be literate and will possess the knowledge and skills necessary to compete in a global economy and exercise the rights and responsibilities of citizenship.

Because they do not have the same stigma as schools and other public institutions, libraries are an important way to reach people who are functionally illiterate. The Onondaga County (NY) Public Library conducts outreach for its literacy program at the waiting rooms of social service agencies; libraries in

South Carolina target outreach to persons at substance abuse treatment centers; the Missoula Public Library in Montana offers a literacy program at a local mall; and the Lane County Library in Oregon uses a bookmobile to deliver literacy materials and instruction to rural residents.

Libraries have also been effective in delivering literacy instruction to members of special populations who are often overlooked by other providers. In Colorado, a library-sponsored bookmobile provides low-literacy reading materials and literacy and English-As-A-Second-Language instruction to migrant farmworkers throughout the state. The Chicago Public Library offers library services and peer tutoring to inmates at the Cook County Jail. The New York Public Library has provided English as a Second Language instruction to 11,000 adults and literacy instruction to another 3,500 since 1984.

In addition to attacking illiteracy, libraries also provide critical resources to respond to the growing basic skills deficit in the American workforce. There are few jobs that do not require sound basic skills. One study of a broad cross-section of occupations from professional to low and non-skilled found that fully 98% of them required reading and writing skills on the job. Yet an estimated

20% of the workforce today has deficient basic skills, reading at or below the 8th grade level. Most job-related reading materials, however, require at least a 10th to 12th grade reading ability.

As the "peoples' university", the public library is also an essential resource for the pursuit of lifelong learning by adults. Lifelong learning has now become an economic imperative as skills levels rise and the economy changes. As it is, Americans change employers and occupations more frequently than workers in all other advanced industrial economies. Every year 20 million Americans take new jobs. Only 25% have previous experience in the same occupation--the rest need additional training.

Libraries are working to fill the gap. Last year in New York State alone, over 428,000 people obtained job, career, and education information and counseling services through their local library. These users received career counseling and advice on developing a resume, information on job and educational opportunities, and participated in programs on how to start small- and home-based businesses.

For many years now, libraries have been engaged in all of these laudable activities which are in harmony with Goal Five of the national goals enumerated in America 2000. Public libraries have been steadfastly and routinely promoting adult literacy, the ability to compete in the workplace, and citizenship.

What is being proposed on pages nineteen and twenty of the booklet entitled America 2000 is not really new. They propose "skill clinics" where "people can readily find out how their present skills compare with those they'd like to have - or that they need for a particular job - and where they can acquire the skills and knowledge they still need." Such a clinic would be very much like a combined Education Information Center and Job Information Center, two innovations which were pioneered by libraries.

America 2000 also proposes a "recommitment to literacy" and a "National Conference on Education for Adult Americans" which "will be called to develop a nationwide effort to improve the quality of accessibility of the many education and training programs, services, and institutions that serve adults." Libraries are the experts on accessibility for programs that serve adults. Librarians should be assigned a leadership role in the development of such a national *conference. At this White House Conference on Libraries, we should all resolve to initiate certain concrete steps toward participation in such a conference on the education of adult Americans which would greatly strengthen our democracy.*

GOAL #6: By the year 2000, all schools will be free of drugs and violence.

Violence in schools is usually perpetrated by students who have learning difficulties. Students who can not succeed in school are usually the students who can not read. Students who turn to drugs are usually the students who can not cope with the instructional regimen. These correlations are well established. Studies have also shown that most students are reading more books at the fourth grade level than at the seventh grade level. The absence of good libraries, the absence of aggressive nurturing encouragement for reading takes its toll on American students. Drugs, violence and other negative influences are usually found only where this kind of vacuum exists. Libraries and reading promote self-worth and self-esteem. Libraries fill up such youthful vacuums with positive substance.

All of the people who care about libraries should become familiar with all *of the six goals. Librarians and libraries can contribute a great deal toward the realization of these goals. And as we facilitate the implementation of these goals we will again have the opportunity to demonstrate to the budget-makers of America how essential libraries have become in the process of promoting literacy, productivity, and strengthening our democracy.*

It is a tragic fact, but in 1991, with the age of information being fully recognized, our solemn mission in this great democracy continues to be one of lifting the veil of ignorance from the eyes of our leaders. With respect to the utility of libraries we must continue an uphill fight against distorted visions, and warped priorities, irrational administrative prejudices, a casual but devastating contempt for an institution and a process that is taken for granted. Those of us attending this conference clearly understand that libraries strengthen our democracy by providing the most education for the least amount of money. But there is some neanderthal force at work all over America which blinds the budget-making officials and they can not see this self-evident truth.

How can so many educated men and women who have all used libraries to gain their credentials and their decision-making positions decide repeatedly *to cripple or destroy libraries? How can so many lawyers in the legislative and executive branches of government who subscribe to one of the most efficient and effective information systems in the world, how can these masters of information literacy continue to dismiss libraries as non-essential? Libraries are not an emergency service like the fire and police departments. But libraries are essential for education. Libraries are essential for democracy. A nation that sincerely strives to become "a learning society", " a nation of students", must have leaders who clearly understand that libraries provide the most education for the least amount of money. Libraries are the cheapest conveyors of the fuel which generates the enlightenment that keeps our democracy strong.*

In order to succeed America 2000 needs the assistance of libraries and librarians of all kinds - school librarians, college librarians, public librarians, special librarians. Obviously we can not wait to be invited to make our contribution. It is our duty to voluntarily and enthusiastically join the effort to strengthen our democracy by improving education.

One of the most fertile ideas in this far-reaching proposal is the call for "Bringing America On-Line ". The following paragraph appears in the America

2000 exposition without any follow-up explanation. We must all resolve that this conference should be the beginning of a process to render the most meaningful possible interpretation of this paragraph:

"Bringing America On-Line: The Secretary, in consultation with the President's Science advisor and the Director of the National Science Foundation will convene a group of experts to help determine how one or more electronic networks might be designed to provide the New American Schools with ready access to the best information, research, instructional materials and educational expertise. The New American School R & D teams will be asked for its recommendations on the same question. These networks may eventually serve all American schools as well as homes, libraries, colleges and other sites where learning occurs."

No other component of America 2000 speaks more directly to the mission of this conference than this proposal for "Bringing America On-Line". It would be useful to have the President's Science Advisor and the Director of the National Science Foundation involved in this monumental project. But the librarians of America represent the group which truly has the expertise to bring America On-Line. The dream of a national information highway is a familiar dream for librarians. Librarians can readily understand how all six of the *education goals could be better implemented nationally through such an information network. Librarians know that all of the citizens of the "learning society" that we hope to create; that every member of this "nation of students" projected by the President; librarians can clearly understand how all Americans from pre-kindergarten to post-doctoral would be greatly benefitted by America On-Line.*

In the end "Bringing America On-Line" may prove to be the most creative element of America 2000 while at the same time it may be the least costly. But the key component, the chips that will make America On-Line work are the libraries already scattered across America. School libraries, public libraries, special libraries, law libraries, etc; all libraries will be necessary. We can not make America On-Line work if we cripple and destroy our libraries. What could be the world's most comprehensive and most accessible information system will never be constructed if we continue to cut budgets and close libraries.

A national system that places valuable information at the fingertips of all Americans is a system which greatly strengthens democracy. For the majority of our citizens local libraries will serve as their point of access to such a system.

If the libraries are not there the system will not work. It's all connected.

The practical and immediate challenge of this White House Conference is to establish an agenda which facilitates the binding of the work of libraries to America 2000 *and other similar efforts to greatly improve education in America. Information and education provide the backbone of our American democracy.*

And beyond the immediate practical work of this conference is the ongoing mission for every delegate and all others who care about libraries. We must strive harder to lift the veil of ignorance from the eyes of our budget-making leaders. Go tell the President and the Governors, the Mayors, the legislators and all others who make budget decisions that the habit of reading and the habit of using libraries and the habit of learning are all inextricably interwoven. Go tell these same leaders that libraries provide the most education for the least amount of money.

These are self-evident truths. They are obvious to librarians. In order for us to save the libraries which are vital for the strengthening of our democracy, these self-evident truths must become a fixed and permanent revelation for all of *our leaders. Only this kind of pubic insight and wisdom can guarantee that our American democracy will endure.*

MOVING FROM "SPECIAL SERVICES" TO UNIVERSAL ACCESS

REMARKS OF DEBORAH KAPLAN
WHITE HOUSE CONFERENCE ON LIBRARY AND
INFORMATION SERVICES

Major points:

Meeting the needs of persons with disabilities need not be viewed as a special activity for "special" people. The necessity of providing library or information services that are special, or out of the ordinary range of services, is a function of the degree of accessibility found in the regular environment. In other words, "special" services are necessary in inaccessible environments. In addition, not all services that are useful to persons with disabilities are limited in applicability to persons with disabilities; for example, talking books, which began as a service for blind and visually impaired people, are now enjoyed by many people who have no vision impairments.

Features and services that provide accessibility for persons with disabilities can benefit all people. Even though wheelchair riders were the primary advocates of the now-ubiquitous curb cuts found throughout the urban environment, they are used and enjoyed by parents with baby-strollers, kids on skate-boards, delivery people with heavy loads, and ordinary pedestrians. Computer-based information technologies that are designed with "electronic curb cuts" may well be the key to ultimate user friendliness.

Another reason to reconsider the notion of "special" services or populations is that there are significant overlaps between the groups that have been identified as needing special attention at this conference:

> disabled/elderly - People over 65 are more likely than those in any other age group to have a disability. Yet most seniors would reject the label "disabled" and might not take advantage of services advertised as only for people with disabilities.
>
> disadvantaged/disabled - Within the population of working-age persons with disabilities, the unemployment rate is estimated to be 65%. Ethnic and racial minority populations have a higher incidence of disability than the population as a whole. This means that solutions to information access must address multiple needs for persons with disabilities from low-income or disadvantaged backgrounds.

illiterate/non-English/deaf - Because many deaf people use American Sign Language (ASL) as a primary language, it cannot be assumed that they are proficient in English. Other deaf people may have limited language skills because of limited knowledge and/or use of ASL. Their needs are language-based more than they are related to their disability.

As information technologies become more a part of delivery of library services, universal access will be easier to achieve, provided that it is considered in the planning process. Universal access means that persons with disabilities will be able to use systems and equipment intended for the general public as much as possible. This will require a shift of perspective, from viewing persons with disabilities as outside the norm to a perception of disability as a rather normal human characteristic, to be taken into account when systems and technologies are designed.

WHITE HOUSE CONFERENCE
ON LIBRARIES AND INFORMATION SERVICES
JULY 12, 1991

Introduction of Secretary Alexander by Gordon M. Ambach

My colleagues, at this essential and vibrant White House Conference, we are privileged to be joined today by the United States Secretary of Education, Lamar Alexander. Secretary Alexander has a remarkable record of leadership in education, as one who placed education at the center of public policy issues for his state and now for the nation. He led the way in two terms as Education Governor of Tennessee with major reforms in his native state. He guided the governors from all of the states, in the National Governors' Association's commitment to education as a top priority for this decade. In just a few short months as the President's principal education advisor, he has given new vision and direction to the Federal leadership in education. He works now with nonstop energy to implement the proposals of America 2000.

Mr. Secretary, while your eyes get accustomed to the glare of the light here -- I know that you can't see many of the delegates and participants -- let me say something to you about those of us gathered here at this conference. We work with information. We work with information from the most eloquent and sensitive expressions of poetry and drama and history, to the most complex bases of data and unbelievably rapid information systems. We work with libraries and information services towards the ends of achieving fundamental goals for our society. We gathered have committed to provide literacy for all as a rite of access to the global mind. We gathered are committed to assure democracy through an informed citizenry which enables our democratic republic to endure and continue as the beacon of hope guiding peoples of other lands to overcome oppression and despotism. We gathered are committed to strengthen productivity through information -- the invisible powerhouse for our future economy. These commitments are central to your concepts of America 2000. We pledge to work with you toward these commitments through Federal action. We look forward to your comments about the central role of libraries and information services in achieving national goals for education.

Ladies & Gentlemen, join me in welcoming Secretary of Education Alexander.

Remarks of Secretary of Education Lamar Alexander

Thank you. Thank you Gordon Ambach, distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen, all. Gordon is one of our nation's most distinguished educational leaders and it is a privilege to be introduced by him and to see him again.

I have been looking over your issues agenda and looking over the list of speakers you have attracted. You are a very distinguished group . I don't know anyone who has gotten this much attention in a long, long time. The President was here yesterday. I talked with him and I saw his remarks to you where he said you're at the center of his idea of a revolution in education in America that he calls America 2000. I worked with the President on the development of America 2000, as Gordon said. He is very proud of it; I am too. But one of the first things that anybody in public life always does when a new public policy is presented to the country is to get some immediate objective, sophisticated feedback from the grassroots about its value.

We got that about America 2000 in the first week after it was announced from a package of 13 letters that arrived from the fourth grade class at Mosshaven Elementary School just outside Dallas, Texas. This objective information focused on the President's idea for a national examination system. The first letter that came in said, "Dear Uncle Lamar, I think the national exam is a good idea. Your nephew, David Carl." David is one of my favorite nephews and relatives. In fact, he and his brother, Jeremy, and my sister and her husband are all in Washington today doing the things that people love to do in Washington. They went down this morning to see the President take off on his helicopter to go to Kennebunkport. I think they are at the FBI building now. There were some other letters that came in with David's. Katy Smotherman wrote, "Dear Secretary Alexander, I feel very good about the national exam [she is in 4th grade]. I like taking tests. Some people think I am weird though. Love, Katy." Jeffery Harrison wrote, "Dear Secretary Alexander, I think you have good ideas for education. Schools of the future should have more computers. I am in your nephew David's class. He is a nice kid." And then the last one I will share with you, this one really reminds us all of how succinct children can be in summing up what the others of us sometimes wallow around in for a long time. Angela Avery wrote about the national examination. She said, "Dear Secretary Alexander, Having a national exam is both a good and a bad idea. It is a good idea because we can see what we need to learn and what we already know. It is a bad idea because it may not make any difference and then we would have wasted a lot of time. Love, Angie." There is a good deal of support for both of Angela's points of view.

The national examination has caused a little confusion too. Brenda Thomas is a teacher in Pittsburgh. A talented teacher, she is on a national advisory board for The Nation's Report Card. I saw her in May, right in the middle of exam season. She said I had caused her problems. Why, I said. She said, "Well my children in the 8th grade saw you on C-Span talking about the voluntary national examination system." I said, well what's the problem. She said, "They refused to take their tests because they said the Secretary of Education said all examinations were voluntary from now on." So I have written a letter to Ms. Thomas' Eighth Grade Class and cleared it up.

I was especially glad to see the Tennessee delegation here. I haven't been gone too long and it is nice to see them. I saw one of my friends from the Memphis Library who was involved with a book and author dinner. I have been in a lot of the libraries in Tennessee because of a couple of books I have written, and in a way that is a nice compliment. In another way, it is a lesson in humility, let's put it that way. Your greatest fear at a book and author dinner is that you will be seated at a book signing table in between Alex Haley and Stephen King and there will be a long line of people for both of them and no one who wants your autograph. That has approximately happened to me a few times. On another occasion, when I was at the University of Tennessee, one of the faculty members was trying to be polite to me; it was my first week. She was being very nice. She came up and said that one of the books I wrote was read by Dick Estel on National Public Radio on the Radio Reader. She said, "Oh, Mr. Alexander, I so enjoyed hearing Dick Estel read your book on National Public Radio." I said thank you very much. Then she turned to walked away, then she turned back and said, "You know, I think Dick Estel could make the telephone book sound interesting." So when people ask me whether this is a difficult job I have now, I say absolutely not. I am prepared for virtually any indignity. I have been a Governor, a former Governor, and a university president, and I love what I am doing.

We were sitting around last night at our new home in Washington with, as I mentioned before, my sister Jane and her husband from Dallas and their two boys. I told them I was coming to see you today. Since my brother-in-law is a famous preacher at the Presbyterian Church in Dallas, I said, what should I say tomorrow? So Bill Carl, my brother-in-law, said, "Well, what do we think of when we think of libraries and people who work in libraries, and people who support them?" Well, sister Jane said, "I still have my library card." She went upstairs. She must keep everything. But she came downstairs with her library card from the A-K Harper Memorial Library in Maryville, Tennessee, that our mother used to take us to when we were children. We talked for a few moments about how quiet that basement always was, the part where the children's books are, and how dusty even some of it was, and how exciting it was to go downstairs there, and how we looked forward with anticipation to where our mother was, who was always upstairs where the adult books were. We wondered how long it might be before we were old enough to also go up there and read those books as well. She took us there very often in our little town in East Tennessee.

Then we talked a little bit about libraries, about how they have changed. Even those of us who don't work in them notice that. Our mother, for example, who used to take us to the A-K Harper Memorial Library now counts on libraries in our town and in our state and in our nation for tapes and for large print books so that she can still read books. She writes a steady stream of irate letters to Bible publishers because she can find no large print Bible with a concordance. So the libraries of today are awfully helpful to her. She counts on them for a lot of the joy in her life. Jane's husband, Bill the preacher, is a good one. He's senior pastor down there at the First Presbyterian Church. He thinks of the word "helpful" when he thinks of libraries and the people in them. He is the senior pastor at that church and he says that every now and then he will call the public library and say something like, "Well, George Will wrote this column six months ago, or maybe it was eight months ago, or maybe it was last week -- could have been last year. It was about this, but it might have been about that, although there was a paragraph in it that had something to do with what I might preach about on Sunday. Could you find it?" He says that they always say to him, "Well, of course, Reverend Carl. And they always seem to find it. He said that on top of this they always seem to enjoy finding it. He can't think of anybody else...we tried to think of some other profession that seemed to more enjoy solving other people's problems and we couldn't think of one.

When were thinking of libraries, I remembered how surprised I was. Ten years or so ago when I would go to the Memphis Public Library or Nashville or Knoxville Public Libraries and discover how many people were in those libraries studying their genealogies. Tennessee, you know, was sort of the funnel to the West with Davie Crockett, Sam Houston, and all that, it seems like everybody who got beyond Tennessee comes back now to check on it. Maybe they do in your libraries too. When I think about libraries too, I think about my dear friend, Alex Haley, in Tennessee who is probably personally responsible for more of the people in your libraries than anybody else because of his book Roots -- and about this saying that Alex has which always sticks in my mind about older people. When an old person dies, he says, it is like a library burning to the ground, which is about an equal compliment to the value of a wise, older person and to the value of libraries in our society today.

You have heard from everyone, it seems to me, in the last couple of days. You have commanded a great deal of attention. Everyone is looking forward to hearing from you. I have seen your issues agenda. I know about your objectives. Gordon carefully went back over those this morning in his introduction: literacy, democracy, productivity, and the other items you have talked about. Let me turn the tables on you just a little bit and ask you to do one more thing other than recommend to us, the President and others and to Congress, your agenda.

Let me ask you to pick up on the President's challenge, when he said that libraries and information services are at the center of the revolution that he calls America 2000. I hope you in your communities -- since you are at the center of them -- will help every single one of them become an America 2000 community. By the President's definition in this little red book that you have seen waived around the last day or two, that means, (1) Help adopt the nation's education goals in your hometown; (2) help the people in your hometown, not just educators, become involved in understanding what it takes to develop a community-based strategy to reach that goal; (3) support the idea of developing a report card to see what kind of progress you are making in your hometown to reach those national education goals between now and the year 2000, year by year; and then in what is a little bit different, (4) help in your hometown, create what the President calls the new generation of American schools. Break the mold, start from scratch, and give our children what they need so that they can become as well educated as they need to be and so that we can have for sure the best schools in the world. Now that really means thinking differently.

The President talks about reaching our potential. He is not really interested in making a long list of people to blame about what I think all of us agree are a skills and knowledge gap. The fact that we simply don't know enough and can't do enough to live and work the way Americans would like to in the way the world is today. He talks about reaching our potential. This is the nation that grew up reading The Little Engine that Could. If it wasn't in the house, it was probably checked out from the library. We believe we can do almost anything. In fact we can. We ought to have bold, imaginative goals. There is no reason for our goal to be second best by the year 2000. But we need not kid ourselves about how easy it will be, nor do we need to think that just by fixing schools themselves we will be able to get where we want to go, because while we need to have a revolution in how we think and how we structure our schools, we also must have a revolution in how we raise and support and nurture the children who attend those schools.

Now, rather than preach in some abstract form about that, I would like to just give you one example of how this book, America 2000, and I hope you will take the time to read it through. It is a strategy, not a program. It is a framework that every state in every community can be a part of, as Governor Romer asked Colorado to do two weeks ago with Colorado 2000 -- every single Colorado community coming together to set their own goals in their own way, 176 communities. That will be happening all across America.

Let's just take a single example in what America 2000 might mean in your community. There is a book by Jim Comer, a distinguished psychiatrist at Yale. The name of it, I believe, is Maggie's Dream. It is a book that I hope is in your library because it is a book about one man's effort to try to help, in his words, "...low income black children received through education the advantages he received from his parents through education." Jim Comer has gone to work now at Yale University, after having had a distinguished career there as a child psychiatrist, to create what are called "Comer schools" in many communities across America. You may know of some of them. In many cases, he starts from scratch in those schools. He finds it easier. That doesn't mean he burns the school down or runs everybody off. He starts from scratch in his thinking. Let's take these children. Let's determine what their needs are. Let's not be incumbered by what we are already doing. Let's see what we can do for them that will help them grow up and learn in the way they need to learn. He pays a good deal of attention to the self-esteem of those children as a way of helping them learn. Now that's just what President Bush is talking about: one by one creating a new generation of American schools, not model schools, not experimental schools, just helping people in communities do what needs to be done; provoking a national discussion and then action about how our schools have changed and how much differently we must think and how much differently we must act to reach these very ambitious goals we have. That is why he has asked Congress to appropriate more than a half billion dollars to help 535 of the first of this generation of schools, such as the Comer schools, to do the retooling that is necessary. That is why he has proposed the new America Schools Development Corporation, a totally private group that, hopefully, will pull together within the next few months the best minds around America -- think tanks, university people, teachers, corporations -- to help communities that wish to create these new schools.

That is why he has proposed a voluntary national examination test that the children from Dallas wrote about. He believes it is hard to create a movement toward excellence unless you know what your destination is, and that we really need to redefine for ourselves in America just what does it mean for what a child ought to know about math, science, history, English and geography in the 4th, 8th and 12th grade. That is why he has proposed, as a part of America 2000, governors' academies for teachers and governors' academies for school leaders, because the math teachers are coming up with a new way of creating higher standards for math curriculum, then math teachers are going to have to have an opportunity to be trained so they know how to teach in this new and different way. That's why the President is advocating choice for disadvantaged families as well as for those with money, so families who are trapped in schools that they think do not meet their children's needs will have a chance to choose for them other schools that do, even though they don't have money.

Middle and upper income families, of course, already have those sorts of choices. That is why the President has also recommended this year that children from disadvantaged families who do well have a merit scholarship as an incentive to pull them through our system so we can send them a strong message that we want you to succeed and we expect you to be able to succeed, and we want to help you succeed. And the better you do, the more chance you are going to have to go to college.

Finally, that is why the President has recommended, and Congress has approved, in about the same amount he recommended over the last two years, the largest increases in funding for Head Start to help children be ready for school. Now that is one of the series of things that the President hopes to do with our children. But one of the lessons of the 1980s was that when we talk about children, we shouldn't stop there. We need to talk about parents too, because as suddenly the as world has changed for students, it has changed for parents.

My final comments would be these: The President has asked us to go from being a nation at risk to a nation of students. When I was at the University of Tennessee, I had to go to about 20 commencements a year. To tell you the truth, I wasn't really looking forward to that when I heard about it; there are all these different campuses. But looking back on it, it was one of the nicest things I had the privilege of doing. Because they are happy events, to see people succeeding and learning, and the cry I heard from the audience more and more as the students went across the stage getting their diplomas was, "Way to go, Mom!" It was the "moms'" graduating more often, not just the children. At the Saturn plant in our state of Tennessee, the workers come down there and go through the assembly headlight plant to find out what they need to do to be able to create a defect-free headlight so that people will buy a car made in this country rather than another one. And after they go through all that process and find out what they need to know, the second question they ask is, "Where can I get good schools for my children." The first question they ask United Auto members is, "Where can I go back to school?" At the University of New Hampshire, where I was speaking at commencement this year, there was Karen Ricker, mother of three, who couldn't make a living, coming back to get her degree so she could make a better one.

Within a few minutes there will be an eclipse in this world that we can see from this country. There is a telescope somewhere out there in space. There are nuclear power plants in your state and you will wonder if they are safe. There was a war in the Middle East, which we know embarrassingly little about. Americans are going back to school, not just to get a better job, but to increase their joy of living, their happiness in life, their understanding of a more complex society. And the extra dividend that occurs when all of these Karen Ricker's, and President Bush goes back to his computer, and the Saturn workers go back to college. When all of these men and women go back to school, extra dividends are what Karen Ricker's three children see. The same thing my sister and I saw when we saw our mother go into the adult section of the "grown-up" books in the A-K Harper Memorial Library in Merryville, Tennessee. It made us want to go there. It set an example for us.

We will have to be doing things differently in America, especially in education and in our thinking about education if we are going to get where we want to go as a nation by the year 2000. There could be no part of American education that understands better how the world has changed than libraries, because they have changed and they are changing. There is no part of American education that is more central to the community that can help move our country toward the national education goals. If this is the country that grew up reading The Little Engine that Could, it is time we checked that book out again of our libraries an opened it up in our homes and begin to thinking about reaching our potential. We need the people's universities, our libraries, at the center of that revolution, helping America community-by-community reach its potential. So my hope is that you will accept the President's challenge. Go home and help in your hometown to make your community an America 2000 community with your library, the people's university, at the center of it.

Thank you.

GOPAC Project

THE HONORABLE NEWT GINGRICH
United States House of Representatives
(Republican-Georgia)

White House Conference on Libraries

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I appreciate very much the chance to be here and I'm very honored to be here and I apologize that I have to speak in the middle of your dinner, but I have to be in Cincinnati later on this evening and I refused to leave until I got a chance to come and talk back to all the librarians of my life and to start by saying thank you. Because without libraries, I wouldn't know very much and I wouldn't be here tonight and I am very, very grateful.

Let me say first of all that probably my greatest claim to fame is not all those nice things they say about me or even the nasty things they say about me, but rather the fact that I am the congressman who represents the Atlanta airport.

Now, given the recent meeting in Atlanta, this is a little bit of a setup, but I ask it everywhere I speak, so I'm going to ask it here too. How many of you have been through my district? How many of you have been through the Atlanta airport? That's a good start, although I do want to encourage the rest of you. We have 45,000 jobs at the airport and we need all the business we can get, so...

I also have a very unusual thing to thank you for. I am a conservative, a Republican. I found myself Saturday a week ago doing something that I think had anybody asked me in the past would have struck me as improbable. I stood shoulder to shoulder with Jesse Jackson on behalf of the cause we both believe in, and that's (_ _ _ _ _).

And I want to say two things. First of all, it was a lot of fun to be able to rally for libraries even though it was warm. And it was a great experience to be with Jesse again. I've done things politically before, but have never really been in that kind of a common cause. I can't imagine anything that was more appropriate to bring us together.

And I also have to confess to all of you that beyond my love of books, beyond the fact that you are in my city, if not in my district, the truth is that Charles Beard is the librarian for West Georgia College. He houses the archives they've set up. He told me I could show up or see my archives burn. It was the most direct experience of library power I'd ever had. And so, I dutifully did what I was told.

Based on that kind of courage, I should also tell you one other thing because I have a genuine neighborly fondness for the American Library Association. I have rented an apartment in the Methodist Building, on the same floor, and, in fact, next to the American Library Association offices. And I try to walk at 6:00 in the morning and my daughter came up to the Women's Political Caucus, which is also meeting this week, drove down here about midnight last night and said she had to get up there this morning and at 6:00 as we walked by, I pointed and I said, "There's dinner." And so, I want to thank my neighbors down the hall for allowing me to come and be with them also.

It is an honor to be here. I want to say, and I really mean this from the bottom of my heart, there was a small public library in Hummelstown, Pennsylvania. There were a series of high school libraries throughout my career. There was the Pennsylvania State library which my uncle, who was a garage attendant, as a state employee, could get access to. And when I was 10, 11 and 12 years old, in the summers, he would take me down to this magnificent building and allow me, got permission for this kid, to go wandering around, totally inappropriate, of course, in the American open stack tradition.

And I got lost in the world of books and I never quite recovered. When my dad was stationed in Stuttgart, the librarians of the Seventh Army library were very generous and allowed me to use the main library of the U.S. military in Europe and helped me understand a lot of things which, in later years, served me very well.

When I went to Emory and then to Georgia State and then to Tulane, librarians made my life possible. When I did my dissertation, (_ _ _ _) Royale in Brussels was an extraordinarily important part of my career.

And over and over again, I can say to a lot of you...and I think in that context, you will understand how sincere this is. There is no single aspect of being a congressman that is more important or more enjoyable than being a user of the Library of Congress. This is one of the great institutions in the world.

And I have never asked Dr. Billington to actually check the records, but my guess is that at a member level, I may be the largest single borrower from the library. And I'm one of those people who is reading 14 books, 12 of which I can find at any one time, and just keep working away. But I do give them all back. I've not lost any of them in 14 years.

But from that experience, I have a passionate, personal belief in libraries and a debt to them.

I want to talk to you tonight at a level of candor that I hope you won't regard as just the arrogant ignorance of some politician that showed up or some guy who talked and ran so you really didn't get a chance to mug him. And I want to be very blunt and I want to say some things that you may not feel fully comfortable with. And if we have time and it's permissible, I'll take at least two or three minutes and allow one or two of you to either challenge or counterattack, depending on how you feel.

But I want to say to you, and I think that there is both a real crisis which is fiscal, but that there has been for at least 10 to 15 years, a real crisis which is structural and intellectual in the nature of how we think about libraries and that while the two are not directly related, the fiscal crisis is a manifestation of what's happened to government and to the tax base in the United States. That the failure to resolve the intellectual and structural crisis compounds and makes dramatically more difficult the fiscal problems. Particularly because libraries, largely being public institutions, the fiscal problem is, in the end, a political problem.

You've got to confront that. It's not a problem just of rationality or of values or what people ought to do. In the end, if you're talking about public money in a free society, you are talking about politics. And to decide not to be political is to decide to unilaterally disarm.

So you have an obligation to understand the world in which you live and the world in which the institution you love lives. And I want to talk in the abstract for just a couple of minutes and, again, I hope you'll permit me, in a conference of this kind, to be a little bit professorial. But I want to suggest to you, you know, we've had a failure of vision...and I use the word we...a failure of vision in the sense that because we are trapped in bureaucratic structures and we're trapped in the bureaucracies of our own mind and what we mean by libraries and what we mean by books and what we mean by knowledge.

And I was, I guess, in my own case, dramatically struck by a book written now almost 30 years ago, called Libraries of the Future which made the essential argument that libraries are dynamic, (_ _ _ _ _) activities involving a relationship between knowledge, people and the system by which the two relate and that each of the three relates together.

You're a pre-printing Gutenberg, pre-Gutenberg environment and you had only parchment and it took a year of a man's or woman's life to write a book. You had one set of relationships and one set of tools. When you got to printing those all hardbound and very expensive, you had a second relationship. When you got to paperbacks, you had a different relationship. But we're now in yet a different kind of order of information and I want to suggest to all of you that in two ways, two very dramatic ways, we have failed to really make the breakthrough. We have failed first to make the breakthrough in how we define the systems within which knowledge interacts with people. So, we're still far too much book bound and we are too much building bound.

So rather than seeing ourselves as custodians of information and as master information sources who then have apprentice information gatherers who we help facilitate, interact with the information, to far too great a degree, we have remained part of the world of print.

Secondly, I think we have failed because by defining libraries as those buildings, we have put them off to one side. Libraries are the thing that the city council eventually gets to. Libraries are the thing that the state legislature eventually gets to. Libraries are the thing that Congress eventually gets to.

I want to suggest in both those cases a radically different view and I want to suggest to all of you that the view is so different that it's best captured, as Jim Pinkerton has been talking about in a speech I would urge all of you to get a copy of from the White House, Pinkerton is the chief long range planner for the President. And he gave a speech two years ago called The New Paradigm. And it was directly based on a fairly famous book by Thomas Kuhn, The Structure of Scientific Revolutions. Basically, paradigm is just a fancy big word for all-encompassing model. But the essence of it is the argument that there are moments in history when, in fact, the change is so profound that it can only be understood as a new system or a new pattern and to try to make the transition while clinging to the old system or the old pattern is to be self defeating.

It is best described in some ways in Peter Drucker's work, The Age of Discontinuity or in Kenneth Boulding's Meaning of the Twentieth Century or Alvin Toffler's The Third Wave.

And I give you those citations because I think it's important to really break loose, think distant and then come back. In fact, I would suggest to all of you that to truly understand the opportunity you have, you need to use a fairly disciplined planning model, which I would suggest to you is four words, very simple model, and the four words are a hierarchy. The top word is vision. And you have to stop and you have to talk through what is your vision of what you're doing.

And until you have finished that, and that is never much more than one page. If it's more than one page, that means you haven't finished thinking it through. Then you start thinking about strategy. And it's always plural. There's no vision simple enough to have a single strategy.

When you have thought through strategies and vision, then you start thinking through projects. Projects are a very simple idea. It is a definable, delegatable achievement. It's not the process of achievement. It is the achievement. It's not the activity. It is the achievement. Now, the less professional or the less knowledgeable the person to whom you're delegating, the more you have to talk about process and activity. The more professional they are, the less you talk about it. What you want to define at the project level is what is it you want to be done in the end.

At the bottom is tactics, what do you do every day? One of the clear examples of a gap between vision and tactics is a problem I have. I have a vision of myself as a substantially thinner person. I have those occasional tactical moments of facing beer or ice cream. And then I have to decide, am I going to live up to my vision or am I going to modify my vision or am I just going to say, "Oh what the heck!" I tend to personally go for the "what the heck." But it also means I never am as thin as I'd like to be.

Now I cite that as an example that a few of you can probably relate to, or have friends who can relate to. But my deeper point here is that you first have to start a vision. And I would suggest to you as a general vision when we think of libraries, that we almost ought to erase the word from it.

We ought to start and say....there are people in American who we interact with knowledge and facilitate and help others interact with knowledge in such a way that on a free standing basis, every American citizen has an opportunity to know more after the interaction than they knew before it started. And we use all of those systems and technologies and opportunities which are appropriate in order to effect the connection between knowledge and people. And the rest is the detail.

And then work back. I want to talk to you in just a minute or two about how you work back. I want to suggest to you...and all of you should have a yellow page at your table unless some dastardly person stole it.

This talks about a process for a successful America. And I just want to walk you through two or three key points on it. This is, in fact, an hour long speech that I did on the House floor, and if you want a copy, if you'll contact GOPAC and ask them to give you a text of the speech.

But the more important thing for tonight is I want to walk you through a couple of big ideas. The first is the idea that we do not need an agenda for change. We need a process for change. There is no agenda large enough to be invented in Washington, because if you invent it in Washington, it's too big. And on the other hand if you invent a small enough agenda for Washington, it's too small for America. Our whole problem has been trying to get fifteen smart people in a room somewhere and say, "Tell us what our agenda on welfare is. Tell us what the agenda on health is. Tell us what the agenda on libraries is." The truth is, you can't get there from here.

Instead we have to begin with what Deming talks about as a process of continuous improvement, which is the opposite of congressional micromanagement, three to five year cycles of legislation, annual budgets and supplemental appropriations on a weekly basis.

Instead what you've got to do, is you've got to think how you liberate systems to constantly change, to actually be managed, to evolve. In that process, I think, George Bush said a couple of weeks ago better than I have ever seen it said in one sentence the essence of how America works at it's best. And they quoted him. He said, "There is a better way, one that combines our efforts, those of a government properly defined, a marketplace properly understood and services to others properly engaged. This is the only way all three of these to an America whole and good."

Now I loved two parts about that paragraph. The first is I have never seen a better description of the tests for America than "America whole and good."

When a nine-year-old dies in a drug fight crossfire, when a sixteen-year-old is in school and has learned nothing about reading, when a child is born with no prenatal care, when a young couple can't find any way to ever buy a house, again and again you are defining an America that is not whole and good. And I think in that sense, the President instinctively describes the right gut task for what we should be striving for in this country. But, secondly, he reminded us that the world is neither as simple as a libertarian would suggest in which the free market would flourish if only government ceased to exist, nor is it as simple as a socialist would suggest in which everything would flourish if only the market would go away and the government existed.

But the fact is it was the combination of the federalist founding fathers' sense of a strong but lean government. It was the Hamiltonian sense of a strong marketplace. And it was deTocqueville's description of an America of private service to others which came together to create the most dynamic entrepreneurial and innovative society in the history of the world and to create the highest range of choice and the highest quality of life in the history of man.

And the challenge to us, I would suggest to you, is to define all three sectors. So when you write your report, you've got to say first, I would suggest to you, what are we going to do in service to others? What are we going to challenge private individuals, private citizens, private organizations, including churches and synagogues, etc.

Second, in what way should the marketplace be engaged? In what way do we reshape the market place? Example: There was a deliberate purpose for subsidizing book (_ _ _ _). The purpose was to encourage people to shift books. Now that's a deliberate shaping of the marketplace. Is that a good shaping, and what other shapings do we want?

Third, given the first two, how is it government should function? And you always define government last because otherwise the natural momentum of bureaucracy crushes the marketplace and discourages service to others.

Now given that model, I would suggest to you on this paper that there are four circles you've got to walk through. I'm not going to spend any time on it tonight except to say they are right here.

You walk first through technology because it is the most dynamic change of our lives and we have to confront it head on. If you'll look second at economic and management principles. And without offending anyone, let me just suggest to you, it's a simple test. Take everything we're trying to tell the Russians and the Czechoslovakians and the Hungarians and apply it to your city.

I will not name a single American mayor, but I will tell you I could find quotes from almost every American mayor which are to the left of the two reforming mayors of Leningrad and Moscow. If you want to hear a real anti-bureaucracy, hire a Russian. If you want to hear somebody that says you've got to have private property and free markets and you've got to privatize things, go talk to people in Eastern Europe. And when you get to the U.S. you suddenly say, "Well, we can't change this and we can't change this and we can't change this, and you mean we actually have to change that?"

And suddenly if you have the kind of experience that Governor Cuomo had the other day where people came up and threw chairs through his plate glass door because they were offended at the idea of change. Now you can't have it both ways. There are principles that work. And does that challenge all of us? You betcha.

But having escorted Vaclav Havel and Lech Walesa and Violeta Chamorro, and having had lunch with Boris Yeltsin, let me tell you, they've been through a change too. As Havel said, he was in prison in October and in December they offered him the Presidency. He went on to say, "That is real change."

Now I'm not suggesting that any of you need to go to prison and then run for president, but I am suggesting that the concept of change and of reapplying the basic management principles and basic economic principles is unavoidable if we're going to be healthy in the world market in the 21st century.

Third, all of us have to learn to apply quality as Deming taught it, and as Crosby teaches it. And I can't say this too strongly. I'm meeting with Mr. Deming, he's now 92, Monday a week... Dr. Deming. Here is a man born in Wyoming, taught in the U.S., whose award is given in Japan for the best Japanese company. And people tell me they worry about Japanese cultural advantages.

I am no more worried about the Japanese today than I would have been in 1941 or 1942. They are good competitors. They are healthy competitors. The fact that they listened to Deming earlier than us is just a comment on us, not them. And the fact is that he is, I believe, the man who most thoroughly understood the dominant organizational principles for human beings for the 21st century, just as Henry Ford and the assembly line understood the dominant organizational principles for the first two-thirds in the 20th century.

And so I think that we have to apply Deming across the board. And Deming is devastating the bureaucracy and he is devastating the rigid rules and he argues for a continuous process, which is literally illegal today in most parts of the American government.

Lastly, we have to go back to traditional American culture. Let me suggest an example. We spent a lot of time on this, almost ten years, trying to figure this out. Why doesn't the welfare state work in America? Finally, a friend of mine said, "You know, welfare states are terrific if you're in a culture that believes in the rules." If you're a German and you wake up in the morning and you say, "What are the rules," and you've got a good bureaucratic welfare state, they are delighted to tell you what the rules are.

Those of you who have been in Europe will recognize the example. In Germany they have a contract with their politicians that they are not allowed to pass a speed limit for the autobahn because if they did, the Germans would have to obey. It's a cultural contract.

Let me suggest to you that in America we have a somewhat different approach to that problem. That in America, not that any of you would do this, but there are a significant number of people who use the speed limit as a benchmark. You know, 25 means 35, 35 means 45, 65 means I hope nobody's out there with a radar. And it's a very important concept because if all of you laugh about it, why would you assume other people will obey petty rules if you don't?

And so when you come to food stamps, which poor people sell for cash, why should that shock you? If you give poor people a negotiable commodity and they believe that 70% of face value in cash is a greater advantage than 100% of face value in stamps, they are going to sell it. And being Americans, they are going to believe that it's their birthright to sell it. And if you hire stamp police, they're going to wait til 5:30 when the police go home and then they're going to sell it.

And I say this because I think it requires us to rethink from the ground up, how does America work and then design government to reinforce Americans rather than continually failing at an effort to convince Americans to behave a though they're good bureaucrats.

Let me give you one minor example about a project I've been involved in for two summers. We wanted to help young people who are poor, living in public housing, who teachers said they were probably not going to learn how to read, children who were at risk. We wanted to encourage them to learn how to read. We wanted an incentive that would work. We wanted an incentive that related to America.

Andy Young was running for Governor of Georgia and he had a wonderful line. He said, "The most important color in Georgia is not black or white, it's green." And he meant, of course, that our free enterprise system, the right to earn a living, the opportunity to produce more drew us together instead of having race and ethnic barriers and religious barriers, and gave us a common goal, working together as people.

So we thought about green. And we went to young children, seven, eight, nine years old. And we said to them...these are poor children, public housing, food stamps, single head of household, no books at home, at risk. And we said to them,"We will pay you $2 a book for every book you read this summer." Let me say to you first of all, not a single child last year, and there were 282 of them involved with West Georgia College, not a single child had any problem with the theoretical concept. Let me point out, this is a very radical concept. This is child labor, and it is piecework.

Second...we did have, by the way, one problem. In Douglas County the kids said to us, "You're going to cheat us. You're going to manipulate us into reading and then you won't give us money." I would suggest to you, when a seven-year-old has already decided their government's going to cheat them, you have the beginning of a bad relationship. We said,"No, we're going to give you cash."

Two-hundred and eighty-two students, very simple system. We used the public library. They borrowed the books. They came to a room where we had adults who were volunteers. We had 47 adult volunteers and one person paid $500 to West Georgia College to hold the paperwork together. You came into a room with the books you claimed you read and you gave them to the adult. These are children's books. The adult asked you questions. If you could not convince the adult that you read the book, they gave you the book and you had to read it out loud. If you couldn't read it out loud, you didn't get the $2. Two-hundred and eighty-two students earned $7,208 reading 3,604 books.

Our number one student was Stephanie Wynn of Villa Rica, eight years old. She read 83 books, she earned a $166. Her dad took a day off of work to protect her. Well, if you give a child that age $166 (_ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _) that she needs protection.

I saw her later on after Christmas. She had bought a baby doll. She had bought doll clothing for her doll. She had bought back to school clothing. She had over $100 left in the bank.

We were teaching three values simultaneously. We were engaged in empowerment. If you'd seen the picture of the nine-year-old girl in Newnan, Georgia buying her first pair of sneakers with the money she had earned so she could go back to school wearing sneakers, that girl was more powerful than she had ever been before. And every day this year I am convinced, she was winning when she put those shoes on.

Second, we were teaching the essence of free enterprise. We were teaching them to be involved in a process of real transaction, to have real money.

Third, we were engaged in literacy. We were trying to get these kids to actually do something good in return for which something good happened to them. Now, let me say a couple of things. We're doing it this year, by the way. West Georgia College is doing it again and Congressman John Lewis and I are working on several projects in the inner city Atlanta. We have a number of...we have six counties in my district engaged. It is actually being done in over ten states. And in California, one of the school systems has actually set up Earning by Learning in Spanish and the school system is matching private, local money to Spanish speaking children reading in Spanish.

Now, I'm not suggesting this is a panacea. I want to point out to you that the entire cost of the program in 1990 was less than $8,000. And we spend $6,100,000,000 on Title I. And I would suggest to you that per dollar spent we probably changed more behavior last summer and had more people walking around holding books than any other program in America per dollar spent.

Let me make two caveats so none of you think I am some simple minded guy who believes you can drag people into (_ _ _ _ _). In the first place, this is not a panacea. This is an experiment. It's one of the thousand ways we have to try to get somewhere.

I don't believe, by the way, that there's anything wrong with offering rewards to children for doing the right things, and I suspect most of you, if you are honest, if you've raised children, have had times when you said, "Well if you get straight A's, we'll go to Disneyworld," or, "If you do well enough in school this year, you'll get roller skates," or "If you don't do well enough, you won't get roller skates."

So my guess is most of you, at some point, have used reward and punishment as a mechanism of interacting with your children. And I don't think, in that sense, it's unfair for us to intervene in a very poor household in which there is no value of reading and offering a reward for children to start doing the right thing.

Let me say, secondly, I don't believe that knowledge should be purely mercenary. I read because I love to read. But I also know that if my grandmother had not been around and if she had not been a frustrated ex-teacher and if she had not given me such an intense ability to read, I wouldn't read because I enjoy reading, cause I wouldn't enjoy reading.

And I do know that if I could spend $500 per child and by nine years of age have gotten them to read 250 books, and as a result if they read so well that when they were bored on the weekend they read, instead of hanging out at the street corner doing drugs, getting pregnant, or any of the nine or ten other things we get out of the welfare system, I'd rather take the gamble of getting them to be so good at reading that they can actually read the rest of their life.

And I think we've got to look at a thousand different experiments, but I think Earning By Learning, which Dr. Mel Steely at West Georgia College is coordinating, and which is now, as I said, occurring in more than ten states, is a fascinating step in this direction.

I'm only going to say two or three more quick things, then I'm going to stop. One, I believe you should start with the notion that if somebody in America needs knowledge, as a general principle, the most efficient way to get knowledge ought to be interacting with the librarian.

Notice I did not say go to the library or interacting with the library. I said interacting with the librarian. And it's very important because I want to suggest you erase everything beyond that that's probably in your head and you start back in. You say, all right I'm a citizen and it's 2020 and I woke up this morning and I wanted to know something. What did I do? My answer in part is you either picked up the telephone, turned on your television or turned on your computer and in fact you may have turned an instrument on which is all three.

And you then called and chatted with your local librarian, either in person or through an expert system. And you interfaced in such a way that you pinpointed, you were able to describe cleverly what you want to know because the librarian was very good at asking you questions that took you through a decision tree. And they were then able to find for you the things you wanted to know so you could learn efficiently what you needed at the point you needed it.

And you did that whether you were worried about health, about learning, about recreation, about improving your wealth and productivity (_ _ _ _ _ _ _). But also...how do I install a new bathroom if I want to do it myself? Or how do I plan my own vacation so I don't have to pay somebody to do it for me? Or any one of a thousand things that improve the quality of your life, but we don't think of as productivity (_ _ _ _ _) take a job to pay somebody else to do the thinking for you.

And so I want to suggest to you that this interface, this living concept, though so profoundly described and so vividly described in libraries of the future, should become real to us. And it should be towards that vision that we design interaction, not, by the way, just library interaction.

Now my second point. At every step of the federal government and we're talking about (_ _ _)...I co-chair the health task force of the Republican leadership, which had its first meeting today. Health is about knowledge. It's about knowing at what age you need to go get a mammogram. It's about knowing when you are pregnant. It's about knowing how to get prenatal care. It's about knowing what to do in order to avoid being sick. And it's about knowledge. It is, in fact, about knowledge more than it's about money.

And one of the reasons we're in trouble is we keep defining health by price rather than by information. If health is about knowledge, then guess where every American should routinely turn under the model I just gave you. The most important health asset in America ought to be the library because our first wrong answer should not be...let's do a public service announcement telling you we'll send you a free 27-page booklet. Our first one ought to be...let's do a public service announcement saying, "Why don't you drop by and pick up the information, which you can borrow and then share with others, which is somewhere within a mile and a half of you if you if you're in an urban area, and which should be available by telephone if you're in a rural area."

That's phase one. And that's true about job retraining, it's true about small businesses competing in the world market, it's true about everything. But, instead, what do we do? We set up a series of highly expensive, channelized, free standing, inefficient institutions, which are inefficient in two levels.

First of all, it is a fairly dumb way to handle knowledge. If you have to be able to figure out if you're a small business person, now which department of the federal government do I go to? Since it's overseas, I guess I go to the State Department. Wrong. Well, maybe then I go to the U.S. Trade Representative. Wrong. Well, then maybe I go to Small Business. Wrong. You probably go to the Department of Commerce, but you might not. Because if what you want to know is how to get retrained for the world market, you go to the Department of Labor; unless you are not already in the work force, in which case you go to the Department of Education; unless, of course, you want to know how to get into a job involving the environment in Kuwait where you want to help clean things up, in which case you might go to the State Department, the Department of Defense Army Corps of Engineers or the Environmental Protection Agency.

Now if you're the average small business person, you would have spent your lifetime savings in Washington walking from building to building before you earned it. And yet if we redesign what we meant by government repository so it wasn't just a place we sent material, but it was a consciously interactive center of real time knowledge. You could call in, go through an expert system and within a very few minutes know, "Oh, for my purposes, I need X," a very different model of thinking about knowledge.

And I won't argue in that sense that librarians ought to be looking at every federal program and saying, "What is the knowledge base in this program which should be in our community?"

We might have four points instead of three points. The third point is going to be, you really ought to, as part of this vision level planning and strategy planning, go all the way out to the user and come back in. You ought to go all the way out to all the different kinds of users and come back in. And you ought to be very daring in how you do it and how you think it through.

Because I would like to see an America...I think an America whole and good in part is an America in which every person by eight or nine years of age is comfortable interfacing with knowledge on their own turf, feels secure exploring knowledge, knows that they have mastered knowledge introducers called librarians to whom they can turn for help. And teachers in a sense may become librarians, and librarians may become teachers, and practical nurses may become librarians, and librarians may become practical nurses in the sense that all of us help people interface with knowledge in a way we don't think about very much right now.

So you go all the way out here and say, "What is it I should expect?" And it's not just the eight-year-olds. What happens when you're 80 and you suddenly have a new health complication? Or what happens if you're 80 and those politicians in Washington change the program and the way you got paid last year for prescriptions isn't the way you're going to get paid this year.

(_ _ _ _ _ _) if you're 80 and you move and now you're in a new community and you need to learn. Where do I go if I'm a senior citizen? Where do I go if I need certain kinds of health? Where do I go if I have a question on social security? If you're in a big city, and you're a senior citizen, you may really be frightened by the scale of learning involved just in adjusting to life in this new environment.

So again, knowledge is needed and I would suggest if you start out there and come back in, you'll find an extraordinary range of opportunities for service that allow you to interface both physically and technologically in ways that are dramatically different than we're used to today.

Lastly, every library in America and every librarian in America ought to start finding a way to build a network of friends of knowledge, not just friends of the library, but friends of knowledge. And ought to recognize you need to have a community which is enraged with the idea that given 27 ways to save money in the city, state or federal budget this year, we managed to choose the one technique most likely to return us to barbarism.

And it should not be the professional librarian's primary job to be the front line of defense. Instead, there should be an informed and aroused citizenry which because they are friends of knowledge, understand why they are the city (_ _ _ _ _) and why they are the state legislature and why they are adamant at the congressional level.

And I think thinking through the vision and strategy to ensure that by the end of this decade in every town in America, in every neighborhood, in every community, there are friends of knowledge networked together who are determined to a simple principle, that every American ought as a birthright to have maximum ease of access to learning and to knowledge on terms that are reasonable, without regard to geography, space, age, or (_ _ _ _).

I'm told I can take one or two questions and I do have to rush and run off, but anybody want to ask anything? Does anybody out here want to ask anything? I can't see you very well with the light. Yes, right here.

Q: I wish you had gotten here earlier. We could have used you in our marketing plan.

NEWT: What?

Q: Where can I get a copy of this speech?

NEWT: I don't know. This speech I assume is being video taped and probably will be reproduced at some point? They say it will be available (_ _ _ _ _ _). Yes.

Q: What's your position on federal funding for library services?

NEWT: I'm in favor of it. (_ _ _ _) right wing conservative who many of you thought I wouldn't normally identify with. I don't see how you have national defense when people are too ignorant and too illiterate to read the manuals to the Patriot missiles.

Q: (inaudible)

NEWT: What's my position about categorical funds for libraries? I can't...for school libraries, I apologize, I frankly don't. I have not looked at that, but I'll talk to Charles and he'll tell me later on what my position is.

Q: I was wondering if you had any (_ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _) do you have any information on how many children returned to the library when the program was over?

NEWT: How many children returned to the library after the program was over. We don't. We do know that based on testing in January this year in the schools that the average child increased their reading by more than a year during the program. But that's a very good question. I'll go back to Steely and ask him to go find it out. That's a very, very good question. And as we design the program for next year we'll try to track that more accurately. Yes ma'am. Right here.

Q: (inaudible)

NEWT: I'll repeat this. Her comment was, they thought...they have a program where they reward the children with books and school supplies and when you read a book, then you get a book from the school. Frankly, my sister-in-law does a program like that for a local library in Ohio where we helped get some money to do it. I think it's a fine program. Our goal, though, was to go into a hard core poverty area with children who explicitly don't value books to start with, find some incentives which they do value and link the incentive to the book. So I think we're dealing with a different group cause we were going after kids who, frankly, if you said, "Read two books and I'll give you one," would have said, "Why would I want a book?" And I think it's a different market. But I think if you get the child up to the point...let me tell you, in my lifetime there were a lot of things my relatives got me to do by saying, "If you'll go out and cut the grass, we'll let you go down and buy two books." And that was, of course, in my twenties. When I was younger I didn't (_ _ _ _ _ _ _) Any other last questions? Right here, yes.

Q: (inaudible)

NEWT: The question is how do I see school libraries linked to education in 2000? I believe, first of all, that was an oversight by Lamar, and I suspect that he is very chagrined.

Let me say something about that, because when you look at the team of Lamar Alexander and David Kearns, you are looking at probably as good a team at the top level as exists anywhere in the federal government. And Kearns did not spend all those years at IBM and Xerox not thinking about exactly what I've talked about tonight.

I've talked at length with both Lamar and David (_ _ _ _). I am convinced that if you look at how they are trying to design their whole program, it is totally open-ended. And, again, I don't want to be so radical I get in a lot of trouble. Every once in a while I say things that are academic and then people go out, my opponents usually (_ _ _ _).

But I want to suggest to you that I think there is a blurring between hospital, health center, job search, learning, libraries, technology, etc., that is gradually blurring together, so that I would almost ask in reverse. I wonder what role we see for schools in the libraries of the future, as opposed to what role we see for libraries.

It depends on how you define the active process and who the intermediators are that help people who are brand new get involved in that process. And I think you are going to see as much debureaucratization. I can give a variation of tonight's speech on education if the NEA wants to invite me that is very parallel to what I've said tonight about libraries, because I passionately believe in learning. And I think that we've got to believe in our children in the 21st century more than we believe in the bureaucracies we inherited from our parents. And we've got to rethink almost everything from the ground up.

So let me just close with this thought. And I mean this absolutely from the bottom of my heart, and I hope you'll take it seriously word for word. This is a country potentially defeated by the cynicism of its own exhausted citizens. And yet I can tell you because I've been in the room with them...when you see a playwright like Havel who was willing to go to jail because of his belief, when you see an electrician like Lech Walesa who climbed over the wall to get back in the shipyard in a police state to join the strikers, when you talk to a Violeta Chamorro whose husband was killed, when you see a Boris Yeltsin who is the first freely elected Russian ever in the history of the human race, you know that idealism and romanticism and the Declaration of Independence are possible.

You are among the most dedicated, the most knowledgeable, the most sincere people in your community. Those are values that tend to select out for librarians. You care deeply. And I came tonight to try to challenge you to break out everything you know to have the courage to rethink, to redream, to recommit, because I honestly believe we are on the edge of the entire human race living in freedom and prosperity and safety, but we will not get there if America decays. And we are in enormous danger of decaying. And we can't afford decay if we keep the bureaucratic welfare state. We have to find a better ways of doing it, better health, better learning, better jobs. The entire system has to get better.

And so I came tonight to plead with you, to believe as Lincoln did in the future of the human race, to believe as Jefferson did in the power of knowledge and to be as prepared as the founding fathers, commit your lives, your fortunes, and your sacred honor, and to know that libraries do matter. They matter enough to be courageous in rethinking them, they matter enough to be courageous in defining them, they matter enough to be courageous in recruiting for them. And I think that this meeting and this conference can be as important a part in America's 21st century as anything that will happen.

Thank you and God bless you and good luck.

Senator Paul Simon--Remarks
July 13, 1991

I thank you personally because I grew up utilizing the library and I regret to say like most of the people who use libraries, I didn't thank anyone--I can't tell you to this day the names of any of those of librarians where I, particularly as a young boy, used the library. I can see them today--see what they look like, but I didn't thank them. And I think there are a lot of people in this country who are in precisely my situation. We feel guilty because we haven't thanked you and so on behalf of all of those people I thank you.

I remember also in college reading the autobiography of William Allen White, the Kansas journalist. In the middle of that autobiography he said, "I got more out of the University of Kansas library than I did out of the University of Kansas classroom." And I remember reading that and I thought that really was true for me too. So I am here, first of all, just to say thank you to everyone.

Last night when I got home there was a weekly English language publication that comes from Poland commenting about political and economic events in Poland, which is struggling so much, and I spotted a story--the heading is "A Funeral March For Public Libraries." Let me just read a few sentences from it. "If present trends continue, we can say goodbye to 10% of existing public libraries. Public libraries in Poland have very little to offer particularly in small towns and villages. A majority of books are trashy, outdated propaganda and the library personnel is seldom qualified. However, 20% of Poles use their services. Of every 5 people who use the library, 1 is retired and 3 are children or teenagers. As we say in Polish, 'children and fish have no right to speak.' As for the elderly, they are only heard during election campaigns when their votes are needed. That is why there is no one to speak on behalf of public libraries. Let's put it bluntly, this spontaneous and thoughtless closing of libraries threatens national culture and education."

I read that and then a few minutes later I read a piece of literature that Dick Wade, my friend who chairs the New York delegation, handed me something that he had written. And he says, "Throughout the nation, public funding is diminishing, staffs are reduced, open days cut back, hours decreased and smaller institutions actually closed." An amazing parallel to what is happening in Poland. And when they say the thoughtless closing of libraries threatens national culture and education, I think we can say the thoughtless shrinking of library services threatens the national culture and education of this country.

I want to see that Poland is helped, but I also want to see that the libraries in this country are helped and you are part of an overall decline in attention to education at the Federal level and, in too many cases, at the state and local level too.

Fiscal year 1949 the federal government spent 9% of its budget on education today we spend 3% of our budget on education. And the appropriations, we were just talking about them--I got some figures last night that are not completely clear to me, but what is happening in the House and the Senate is, clearly, we have rejected the administration's request for cuts. But we are just holding on and not really holding on because if you add the inflationary factor it means there is slippage and that has something to do with the theme of what you're talking about here.

I read this morning in one of the morning papers about the trade deficit figures. You know, a trade deficit is something that has to be paid ultimately. It will be paid either through a reduction in our standard of living--the quality of our life--or it will be paid through increased productivity of our people. Clearly the better answer is through productivity. That's where libraries come in. That's were education comes in. That's what we have to be stressing. Unfortunately, we are not stressing that enough.

Democracy--saw an article this week stressing the melting pot strength of America. The article suggested it was somehow a breeding process where the Pole married the Italian who married the Greek who married the African American. You know it's not a breeding process. The melting pot strength of America is this free flow of ideas that gives us strength. And out of that free flow of ideas is we can pick the best.

When we diminish the base of support for libraries, we diminish that free-flow of ideas. It is not only the financial side, I would add, it is also when someone tries to take an unpopular book off your shelves.

I served in the army over in Germany. I happened to be there when Senator McCarthy was in his hey day. We had in the small community where I was stationed what was called an America House Library and they took a bunch of books out of those libraries because they offended some people. And I thought what an example to set to the people of Germany where we criticized them when Hitler was burning books. We weren't burning books but we were doing almost the same thing.

There are a host of things. When we increased, unnecessarily, the postage on books and newspapers and magazines we reduced the free-flow of ideas. The increased cost for newspapers going into rural areas--postage costs--has resulted in a decline in the reading of those newspapers. It means that more and more people are reliant on television for their news. Is that a good thing for America? We know it is not a good thing.

If I may lobby on something where I assume there is some disagreement here, when you talk about the free flow of ideas, I want it to be **free**. Historically, libraries are free without fees and if I may lobby you, I want to keep them that way insofar as it is possible to do. All of these things I am talking about require resources. There is no shortage of pleasant words to greet your White House Conference. Pious platitudes are in abundance. What you need here in Washington is a message from some of us that there will be an enhanced federal support level. There will be more federal resources.

We have just gone through an experience in the Middle East where we have seen the U.S. military perform superbly and we apply the creativity and talent of this nation to meet, what I think most of us agree was, a threat in the Middle East.

We may differ on how we should have responded to it--we do differ on that. But we galvanized our resources for that perceived threat in the Middle East.

We have threats right here at home and we need to galvanize our resources right here at home. What the war showed was when we really focus our attention on something, we can do it well and what we have to do, among other things, is focus that attention on education. Education is not a luxury, libraries are not a frill. That is a reality we have to face.

David Halberstrom, in his book The Next Century, says--he was stationed with the The New York Times in Japan for a while--he said, "The stem that winds the watch of the Japanese economy is education." That's the reality that we have to face.

Now let me, finally, take a few minutes to talk about literacy that you mentioned in your introduction. Let me tell you first how I got into this. I was a member of the House and we used to have open office hours. People came in one at a time with whatever their problem was. If they had a social security problem, or a black lung problem, or some problem that required me to go into their records they had to sign a form authorizing me to go into their records. Every once in a while, someone would say, "is it okay if my wife signs...is it okay if my husband signs?" Slow as I am, I gradually realized we had some problems. Sometimes people would very carefully draw their name. You knew it was the only thing they could do. So I held the first hearings in the history of Congress on the whole question of illiteracy.

Ted Bell, former secretary of Education, has written that as Secretary of Education he didn't realize the problem until he was asked to testify before my subcommittee and he came in and as a result of that testimony we set up a series of breakfast meetings and one of the people, to her great credit, who got involved in those breakfast meetings, was Barbara Bush, the wife of the then Vice President. Let me just add, Barbara Bush has been absolutely superb in this area and I am very grateful to her

Let me tell you about three people because I think they illustrate this problem. I held a town meeting in the little community of Tutopolis, Illinois 2 years ago, maybe 3 years ago, now. A town with about 750-1000 population. And a woman got up and she said, "My name is Gloria Waddles, I am 45 years old and I am going to read to you the first letter I have ever written." She read this letter thanking me for setting up the VISTA Literacy Corps under which she learned how to read and write, but it was really the story of her life.

Halfway through the story she started crying and she had half the townhall meeting crying. When she finished I said Gloria would you be willing to come to Washington and testify, and she said yes. She came and the same thing happened. And Senator Nancy Kassebaum, Senator from Kansas leaned over to me when she finished and said, "I know I'm a Senator. I'm not supposed to cry but I couldn't help it." There was a little item in the **Washington Post** about her testifying and someone called me and if you are a football fan you'll recognize this next name. A fellow by the name of Dexter Manley called. He told me his story. I asked him to testify. Dexter Manley was an all-pro defense player for the Washington Redskins, a name that I don't like I might add to my friends that are Native Americans down here.

And if I may digress, it really is demeaning to have names like Washington Redskins along with Chicago Bears and Los Angeles Rams.
We would not tolerate a team name called Washington Blacks or the Washington Jews. One of these days we're going to do better on this. Anyway that is not why you asked me to come and speak here.

But Dexter Manley was standing on the side lines--Joe Theismann the quarterback for the Redskins broke his leg, and Dexter Manley asked--he's making $600,000 a year--"What happens to me if I break my leg?" He did something most people who have problems don't do. He called a Washington school and said I need help. They tested him--he was reading at the second grade level. This is someone who had been through grade school, high school, four years at Oklahoma State University. They found out he had a learning disability. When he testified before us, he was reading at the ninth grade level and was studying Japanese. I won't go into the whole full story. There are some bumps in the road for Dexter Manley but basically he is moving ahead in a very constructive way.

Well, a woman who works in the Capitol, some of you have probably seen her, came up to me because Dexter had been on the Washington television. She said, "I saw where you're helping Dexter Manley. Do you think you could help me?" And I said, "I'm sure someone can." I had a member of my staff contact her and every time I would see her I'd say how are you doing and she say I'm working at it and then a few weeks ago I was walking in the Capitol and I saw her about thirty feet away. I waved at her and smiled and she waved back and smiled. And then she did something that was significant for her and for me but for no one else around. In her other hand she held up a book.

What that did for her and what we have to do for so many other Americans--23 million Americans by the most conservative estimate are functionally illiterate. That means they can't read their child's report card, they can't read a classified ad in a newspaper. They can't fill out an application form. About four million adult Americans cannot read their name in block print. Libraries, I'm please to say, are serving an important function here. And I am here to lobby you, just as you lobby us, to continue that and do even more. It is extremely important. People who are functionally illiterate will not walk into a grade school. They will not walk into a high school. It's embarrassing to do that. They will walk into a library. There is nothing embarrassing about walking into a library.

It is a host of personal problems you don't even think about. It's the woman who testified before our subcommittee in Chicago who thought she was giving medicine to her daughter only the bottle said poison and she couldn't read the word poison. And a tragedy was avoided, but barely avoided. It's all those things and its the loss to this nation. Dick Wade told me the other day that it takes $2000 to teach somebody how to read and write, $8000 to keep them on welfare including administrative costs and $50,000 to keep them in prison. Well, we can do better. The National Literacy Act, which will for the first time in a coordinated and comprehensive way really start moving the Nation ahead up.

Until this point, frankly, I got an amendment on the Library Services Construction Act and a little college work study and we put a band aid here and there. But now we have a chance. This bill is going to the President and the indications are the President is going to sign it. But then we have to follow through with appropriations and we're going to have to make sure that we do what is needed. But we need your help on all this. Just as we need your help in your continuing good work in your community.

Let me close by telling you a story about someone who was a great advocate of libraries. Some of you perhaps knew him, those of you from New York, perhaps, knew him. Many of us have heard of him. Senator Jacob Javitz was a Senator from New York. He lost an election in New York and shortly after he lost the election it was discovered he had Lou Gherig's disease. You could just see Jack Javitz just kind of shrinking in front of you. He had been a very vigorous man.

About 8 weeks before he died he came into my office wearing a device on his chest to keep him breathing and they plugged the electric outlet in to keep it going and he started lobbying me on a bill he was interested in and when he was finished lobbying me I said to him, "Jack you're an inspiration." I'll never forget his response. He said, "Paul, you have to have a mission in life." He's right and part of your mission and my mission is to see that libraries of this Nation, of the world are strengthened and improved so that we can have opportunity for all Americans--not just those of us that are here, those of us that now take advantage of libraries now do that. But many, many more can enrich themselves, can enrich this country, can enrich the world. Keep up your good work. Thank you.

Remarks by James H. Billington
The Librarian of Congress

White House Conference on Libraries
and Information Services

July 13, 1991

Many thanks to Joan Reeves for that introduction. Joan's persistence, good humor, and dedication have always personified for me the best in library tradition, and I would like to hail her and all the others who have done so much to make this conference a success.

I am honored to speak at this dinner and to recognize that in inviting me, you are honoring the staff of the Library of Congress who have worked so hard to organize our reception and to man the resource center during this conference. The timing has been as appropriate as the theme of this gathering. The Congress, the White House, the states, and many local communities are all pondering strategies to expand literacy, to increase productivity, and to strengthen our democracy in the decade to come. We have heard from the President, Mrs. Bush, Mrs. Quayle, and senior members of the Congress. We have emphasized national priorities. We have heard some imaginative ideas -- Bob Wedgeworth's proposal for a National Library Corps devoted to literacy; the use of TV satellites for public education; partnerships between local public libraries and school libraries; a national library card. We have been made more fully aware of the relevance to our libraries of cultural diversity, of physical disability and, above all, of the power and promise of youth.

This conference, arising out of grassroots meetings in every state, will make a special contribution to the national strategy.

The Library of Congress, which I serve, has defined service as its first and highest value and made service to the nation beyond Washington our major new frontier for the decade leading up to the Library's bicentennial in the year 2000. Let me begin by describing some of the ways we hope to be working with others in the nation's quest for increased literacy, for greater economic productivity, and for strengthening democracy through knowledge -- the concerns of this conference. We are all in this noble endeavor together, and it is our purpose to reenforce the efforts of librarians across the country.

For more than a decade, our Center for the Book has promoted reading and literacy; there are now some 25 active state centers for the book with countless programs in libraries and schools. Our "Year of the Lifetime Reader" national campaign is currently underway with Mrs. Bush as honorary chair and 40,000 post offices featuring promotional posters. Our Global Library Project, a nationwide series of cable television programs that Glenn Jones has made possible, promotes the importance of libraries and the joys of the book; it is the only such series on American television. Our new Summer Institutes for teachers and librarians demonstrate how great subjects, like The Bill of Rights, can be taught directly from primary materials in the collections of the Library of Congress.

In an effort to provide even more for the national library community than the cataloging, materials for the blind, and other services we have traditionally provided, we have now put our entire automated bibliographic records on-line to two-thirds of our state libraries -- and have begun moving beyond the sharing of bibliographic information to the sharing of the contents of a collection that will soon total 100 million items. Our American Memory program, now in its early stages, will bring the Library's unique multi-media collections on-line to libraries and schools across the country, thus enriching local institutions with exact surrogates of primary documents of American history that have hitherto been available only to a few scholars working in Washington. We believe that the young will be spurred on to seek supporting knowledge in the books that will surround the American Memory alcove in their local library. While using new technology to search old materials, the student will have to use his mind actively as one does in reading a book or browsing a stack rather than continue as a passive recipient of TV images.

The Library is also moving ahead to serve the cause of greater productivity in the knowledge-based sector of the economy. Our Copyright Office is now registering more than 600,000 creative works each year and is working closely with legislators, publishers, and librarians to assure that new forms of expression, such as semi-conductor chips and software that support our competitive industries, are protected, encouraged, preserved, and made available for use. Our Law Library is creating foreign legal databases so that American companies can get quick, accurate information about laws in potential foreign markets. We have undertaken to create a new Science and Technology Information Center, which will not only increase access to our own large intake of foreign scientific materials but also provide a kind of electronic "Yellow Pages" guide to networks and databases of scientific and technological information elsewhere. Working in conjunction with other libraries and institutions and with our newly upgraded National Referral Center, we should be better able to help researchers across the country find what they need wherever it is. This involves a complicated series of tasks, but many in the Congress and the scientific community see them as essential to America's economic advance. They will be added to (not subtracted from) other traditional services.

The Library of Congress serves democracy in a special way, of course, by providing information and expertise to the Congress through our Congressional Research Service -- some 800 people drawing upon all the resources of the Library every day. At the request of Congress, we have begun to help new parliaments in Eastern Europe -- in Hungary, Poland, and Czechoslovakia -- create their own libraries and information services. Some 500 people from the Soviet Union alone were working in the Library of Congress last year, many on constitutional questions. Anyone who wants to understand the current struggle for democracy in the U.S.S.R. will want to consult the massive collection of new independent publications that our Moscow office is now sending to the Library. Because democracy must be knowledge-based and locally rooted, libraries everywhere and library associations have a great role to play in encouraging democratic development in the Third World as well as in the post-totalitarian Communist world.

As we look ahead to the increasingly internationalized, networked 21st Century with its audio-visual glitter and instantaneous electronics, it may be well to remember what the heart of our historic library enterprise really is. It is basically books and people.

Books are and will remain essential artifacts in a humane society -- the accessible, portable, affordable basic source of knowledge and guide to understanding for the individual library user. At a time when books are being deconstructed in the academy and digitized in the factory, they should not be dishonored -- let alone destroyed -- in the library. Books put things together rather than take them apart; they convince rather than coerce; they tend, over time, to turn wise guys into wiser, and nicer, people.

The printing of books made modern democracy possible; broadening access to books has spread and sustained it; and, in our country at the dawn of this century, the creation of local public libraries made our democracy both dynamic (by giving everyone the chance to learn) and pluralistic (by including all points of view).

But beyond the books lie the people who write them, read them, and mediate their human content to other human beings. The book, like any other stored source of knowledge, is something which our ancestors created so that people can use it today to create a more humane future for their progeny. The librarian is the mediator between those who have gone before and those who will benefit later from the new insights or new ways of doing things that have invisibly germinated in his or her reading room.

Paradoxically perhaps, the more technological, the more impersonal and electronic the means used to store and transmit knowledge and information, the more important the humanizing function of the librarian will become. Technology does not push the librarian to the margin; it puts him or her at the center. The librarian is the unique guide for people who want to find things out amid the information overload of our time. The librarian will need an active mind if he or she is to foster active minds -- and not just unwittingly create passive spectators at his or her technological games. The librarians of the future may need to spend more time reading themselves in order to help others make quality choices. The larger the sea of information that inundates us, the greater the need for skilled librarians to serve as human navigators. And they will need to steer by the stars as well as by modern instruments. Our North Star is always truth, the pursuit of which is the highest form of Jefferson's pursuit of happiness. Our calling is to aid in the pursuit of truth, something which helps keep us from the pursuit of each other. This ongoing search channels humanity's energy into the life of the mind and spirit, the only arena in a time of growing physical limits where the horizons still remain infinite for our cherished ideal of freedom.

In a world of loud noise, deceptive packaging, and mindless motion, librarians offer all people the promise of renewal in what Keats called "silence and slow time." They invite us back from the talking heads of today's television into a silent conversation with yesterday's book. It is democracy's most dignified and dynamic dialogue, because alone with a book, my horizon is limited only by my own imagination, never by someone else's image.

But what is lonely is not divisive, for the pursuit of truth is basically non-competitive; each person gains by another's discovery. Libraries are the base camps for this adventure. Librarians are not only the guides, but the living link that connects today's explorer with yesterday's experience the way a lifeline connects one mountain climber to another.

America has really no choice but to recognize the crucial role of its libraries and librarians and to make them more central to our schools and information industry -- or else face long-term decline. I cannot accept the defeatist notion that our television culture, with its promotion of passivity, mediocrity, and instant gratification, will leave us unwilling to read books, to use information, to gain knowledge, and hence preserve our democracy or advance our economy. This conference has spelled out much of what needs to be done for the future of libraries and the progress of all Americans in the 21st Century.

So in this city of summits and the pursuit of power, let us conclude by hailing those who guide others through all the valleys of this land in pursuit of truth. If a belt must be tightened, let it be around the waist, not around the heart. For the heart is the people who do the Lord's work, helping other people of all sorts and conditions link up with the lifeline of lifelong learning.

A native American from the Great Plains likened to me some years ago modern American librarians to those in the earlier Indian culture who kept memory alive through oral tradition and were called the "dreamkeepers." In a thousand places in a thousand diverse ways, you and thousands who stand behind you in this enterprise are among the truest guardians of our common American dream that, whatever the problems of today, tomorrow can always be better than yesterday.